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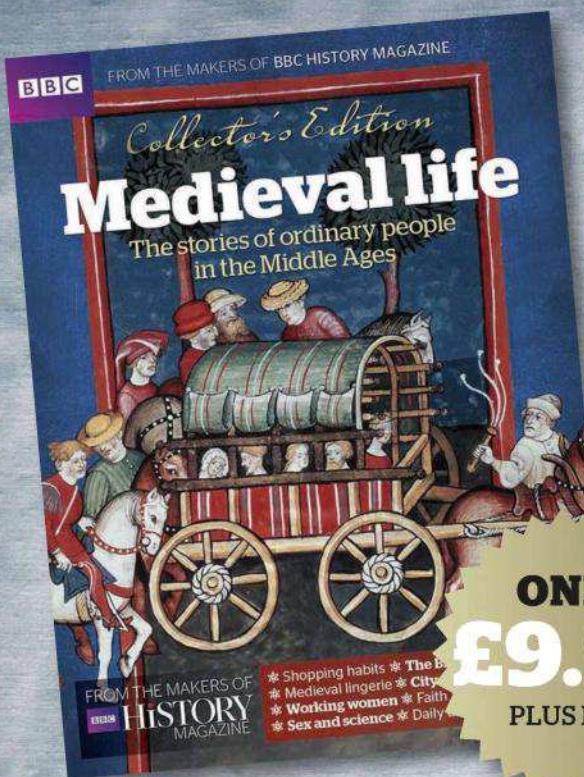
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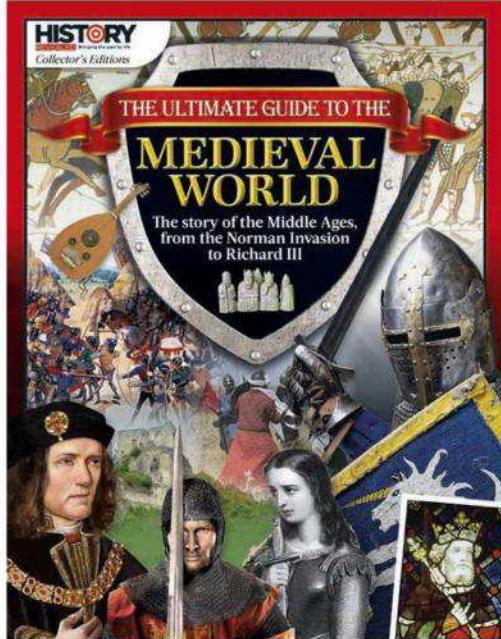
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# Welcome



The arrival of **William the Conqueror** on England's southern shores close to 1,000 years ago, heralded the dawn of a new era – what we now call the medieval world. It was a time characterised by **a seemingly endless round of wars** over land and power that continued for centuries. The knights of the crusades took battle to the Holy Land, while closer to home, **England and France locked horns** in what became known, somewhat inaccurately, as the Hundred Years' War.

It was a time of great change – **the Black Death decimated the population** as a terrifying plague swept across Europe. There were larger-than-life characters, such as **Richard the Lionheart, Henry V, Joan of Arc and Richard III**. And it could be a time of great cruelty, with horrific tortures used to extract confessions from traitors and enemies in the dungeons of castles.

But **how did this period of history actually play out?** What were the political factors that caused such **widespread conflict**? Who were the winners and who were the losers?

Don't forget we have more medieval history every month, why not turn to **page 28 for details of how to subscribe to the magazine?**

Happy reading!

**Paul McGuinness**

Editor

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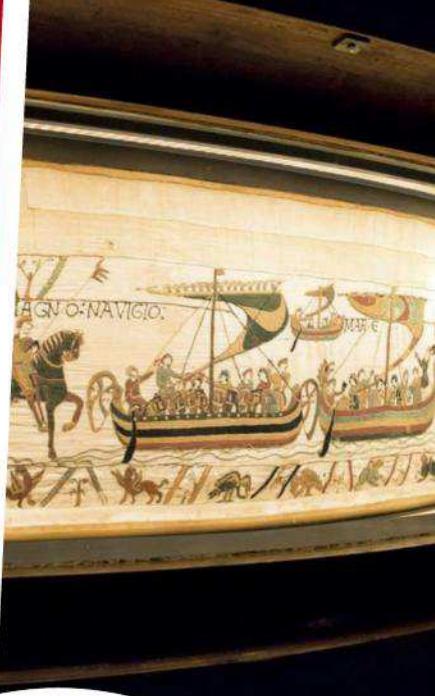
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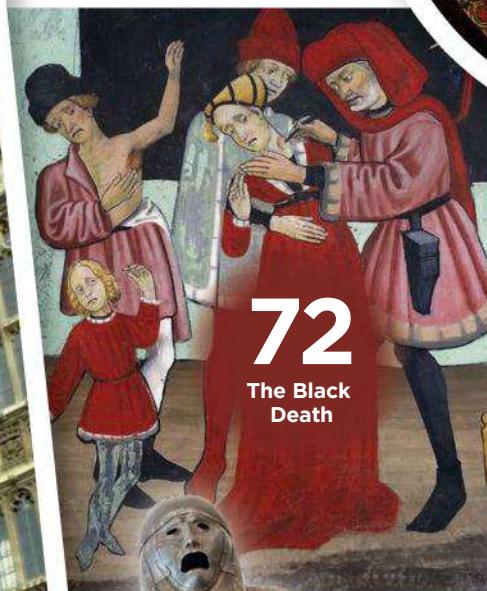
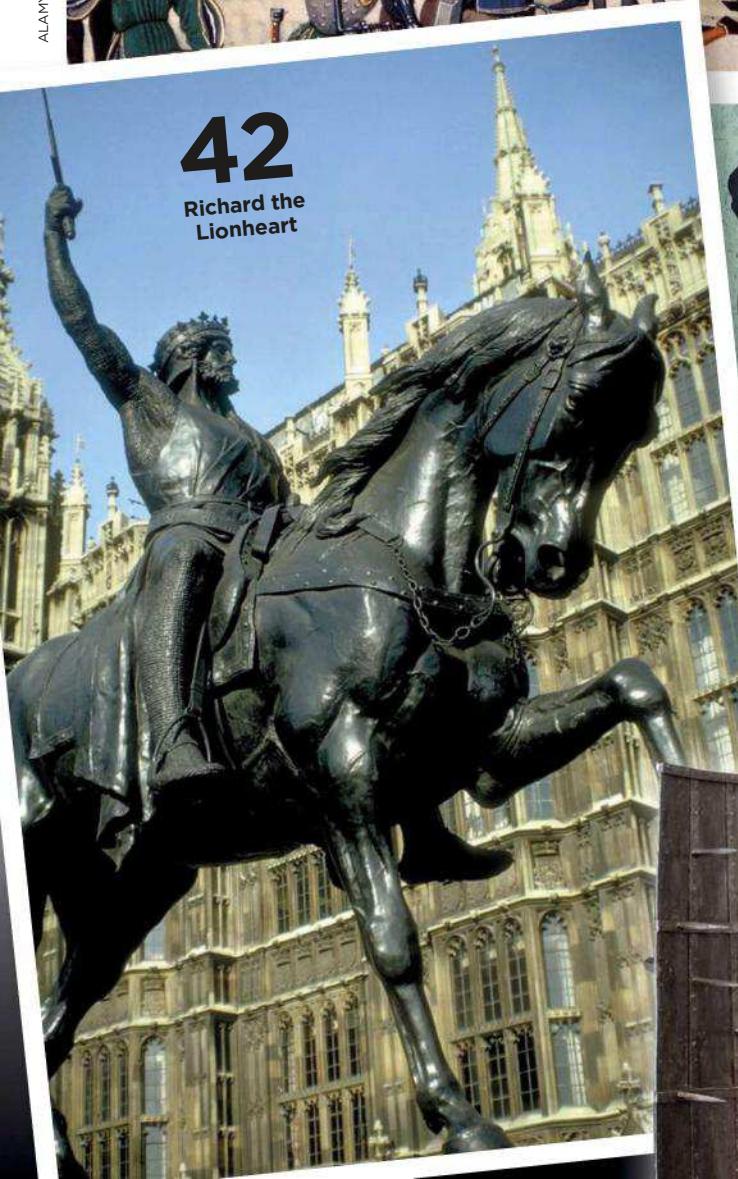
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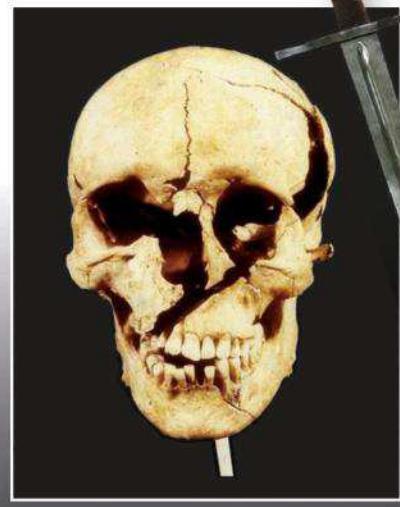


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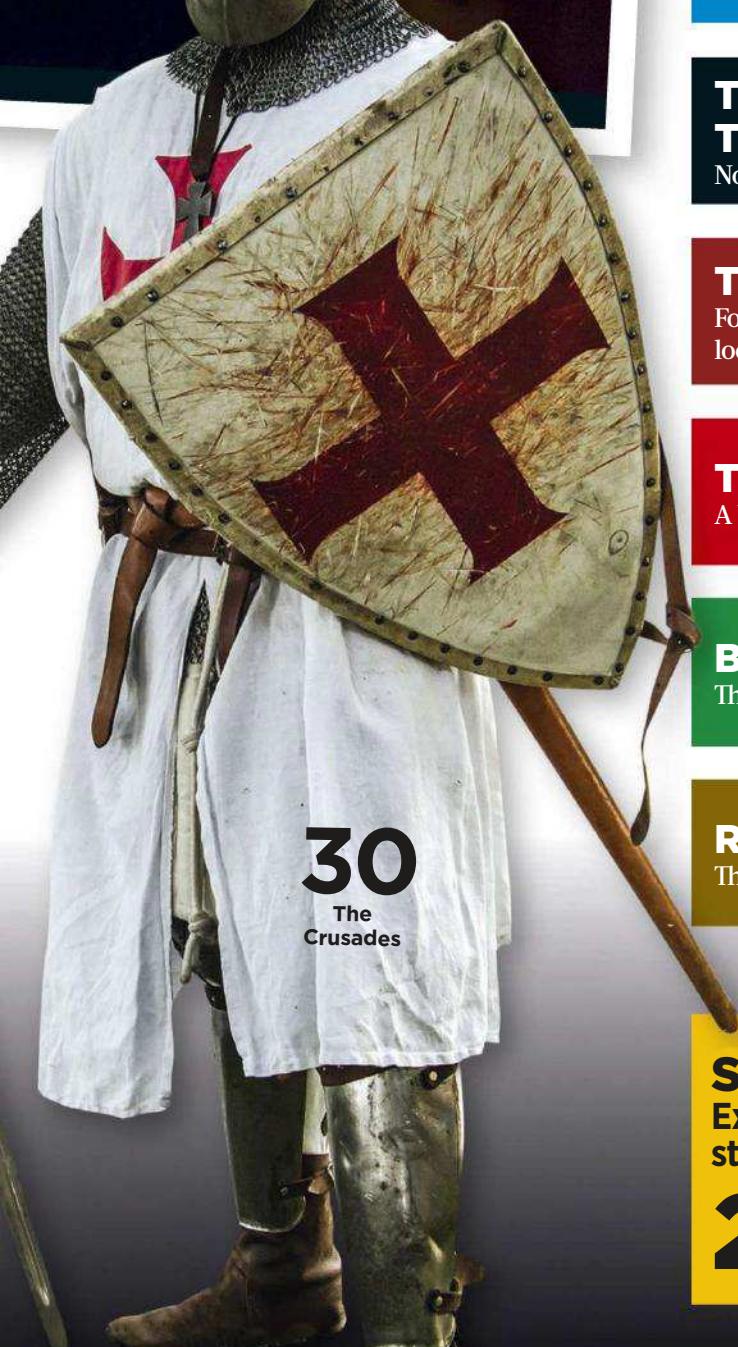
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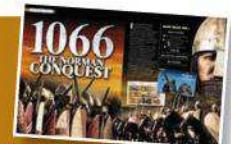


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# 1066

## THE NORMAN CONQUEST



It is the best known date in English history. And rightly so, for William of Normandy's conquest of England ushered in not just a change in the country's ruling elite, but also major changes in England's culture, language, land ownership and, indeed, its very place on the international stage.

But it would be wrong to think that all this happened overnight – after one cataclysmic battle. The Battle of Hastings was vitally important, of course, but it was just one of three battles to be fought in England that year – and it would actually take several years of hard campaigning before William the Conqueror could feel secure on the English throne.

We explore the dramatic and often violent events that made up what we now know as the Norman Conquest.

## NOW READ ON...

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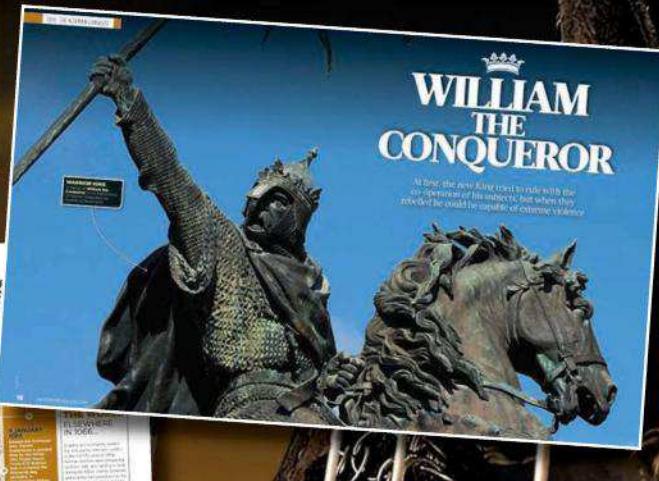
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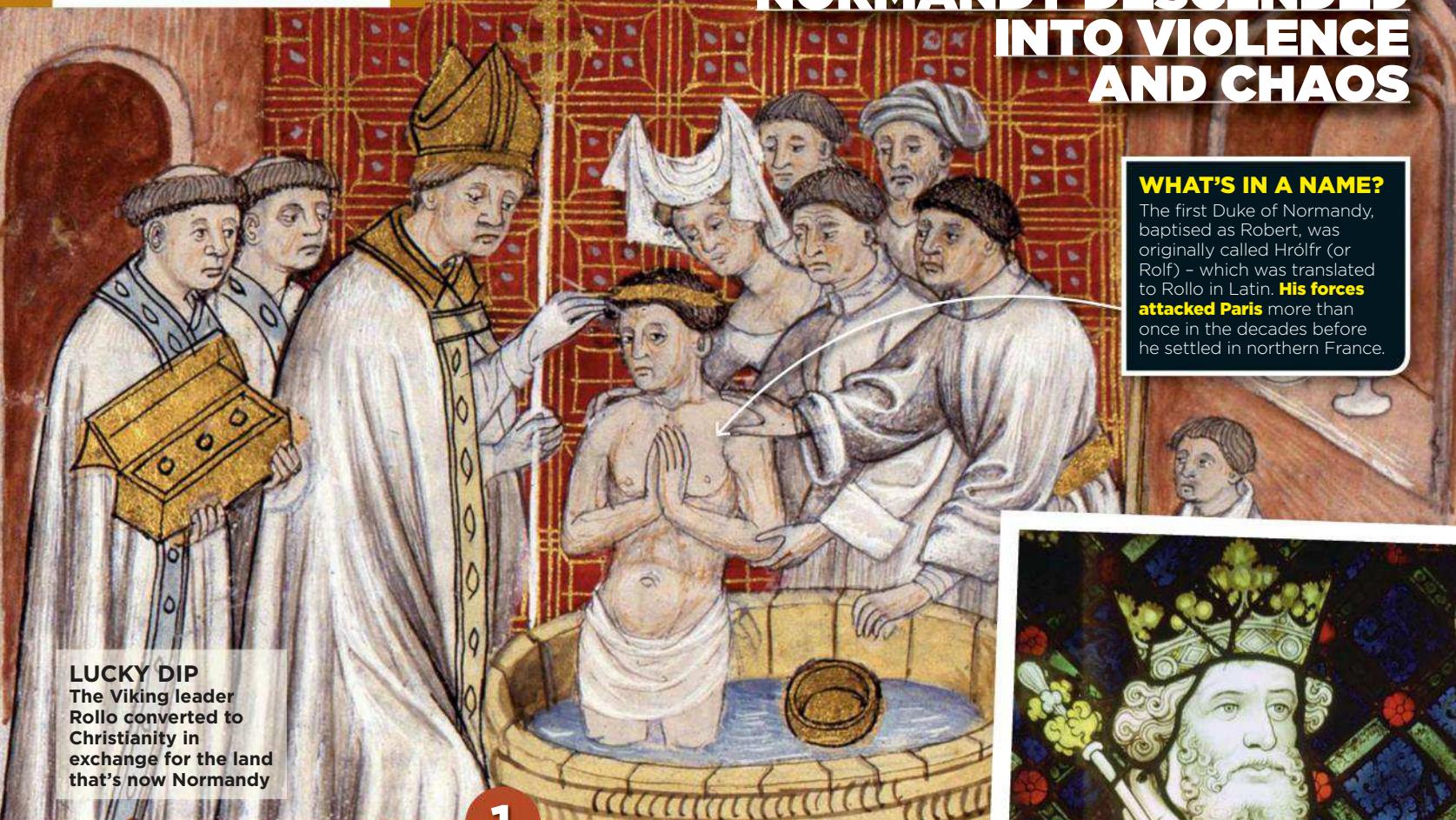
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## LUCKY DIP

The Viking leader Rollo converted to Christianity in exchange for the land that's now Normandy

1

## HOW NORMANDY AND ENGLAND WERE BORN

As northern France transformed Vikings, Wessex evolved into the kingdom of England

**D**uring the summers of the eighth and ninth centuries, bands of Vikings sailed their longships from Scandinavia to raid monasteries and towns in Britain, but also in the region we now call northern France. After years of seasonal raiding, they began to overwinter in that area. By the early tenth century, one Viking leader, Rollo, had become powerful enough to force the French king to cede to him the region around Rouen. This became known as Normandy – the country of the 'Northmen'.

These Normans, as they became known, gradually shed their Viking heritage. They converted to Christianity, adopted a French dialect, mastered the art of mounted warfare and married into the families of their French neighbours.

In 1035, Duke Robert of Normandy died, leaving William, his illegitimate 8-year-old son, as his heir. Normandy descended into violence and chaos as rival magnates sought first to control the young Duke and then, as he grew older, to replace him.

William, though, was a survivor. In 1047, with the help of King Henry I of France, he defeated a major rebellion at Val-ès-Dunes near Caen. And as he became increasingly secure, William looked to expand the area of land he controlled.

Like the Normans, the ancestors of the English were invaders. In the fifth century, tribes of Germanic peoples – Angles, Saxons and Jutes – began migrating to the island formerly known as Britannia. They established a number of independent kingdoms that, like Normandy, later converted to Christianity. In the ninth century, all of these kingdoms were overrun by the Vikings.

### READY OR NOT?

The Old English *unræd* means 'ill-advised' – Æthelred was not really considered 'unready'

#### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The first Duke of Normandy, baptised as Robert, was originally called Hrólfr (or Rolf) – which was translated to Rollo in Latin. His forces attacked Paris more than once in the decades before he settled in northern France.



#### GOLDEN GREATS

ABOVE: The Dane King Cnut, also 'the Great', ruled England for two decades

RIGHT: Alfred the Great is depicted on a silver penny



All except one. Wessex fought back – first under the leadership of Alfred the Great, then under his successors. In doing so, a new state was forged, with a single king, law and coinage, and a highly efficient tax-collection system.

At the end of the tenth century, the Viking raiders returned to Britain in greater numbers than ever before, forcing King Æthelred II into exile in Normandy. Æthelred had previously begun forging links with the Duchy in an effort to prevent the Vikings from using Normandy as a base from which to raid England. To strengthen these ties, he married Emma, daughter of Richard I of Normandy. One of their children was the future King Edward the Confessor, who spent much of his early life in exile in Normandy. Meanwhile, England was ruled by Danish kings – first Sweyn 'Forkbeard', who had defeated Æthelred in 1013, and later his son, Cnut the Great.

# RIVAL CLAIMS TO THE THRONE

The death of Edward the Confessor left four competing would-be kings

**W**hen Edward the Confessor died, the individual with the best dynastic claim to succeed him was Edgar the Ætheling, grandson of King Edmund Ironside who had ruled for less than six months in 1016. But the hereditary principle was not as important in Anglo-Saxon England as it was to become in later years, and Edgar – who was only about 15 in 1066 – lacked a power base.

Harold Godwinson had no dynastic claim. But he was the most powerful magnate in the kingdom and commanded the support of the council of English nobles known as the Witanagemot (or Witan). This was crucial, because their acceptance was the acid test for kingship. Harold also claimed that Edward, when on his deathbed, had named him as successor. Though William of Normandy was a distant



**CROWNING GLORY**  
Harold's coronation, probably in Westminster Abbey, began his short rule

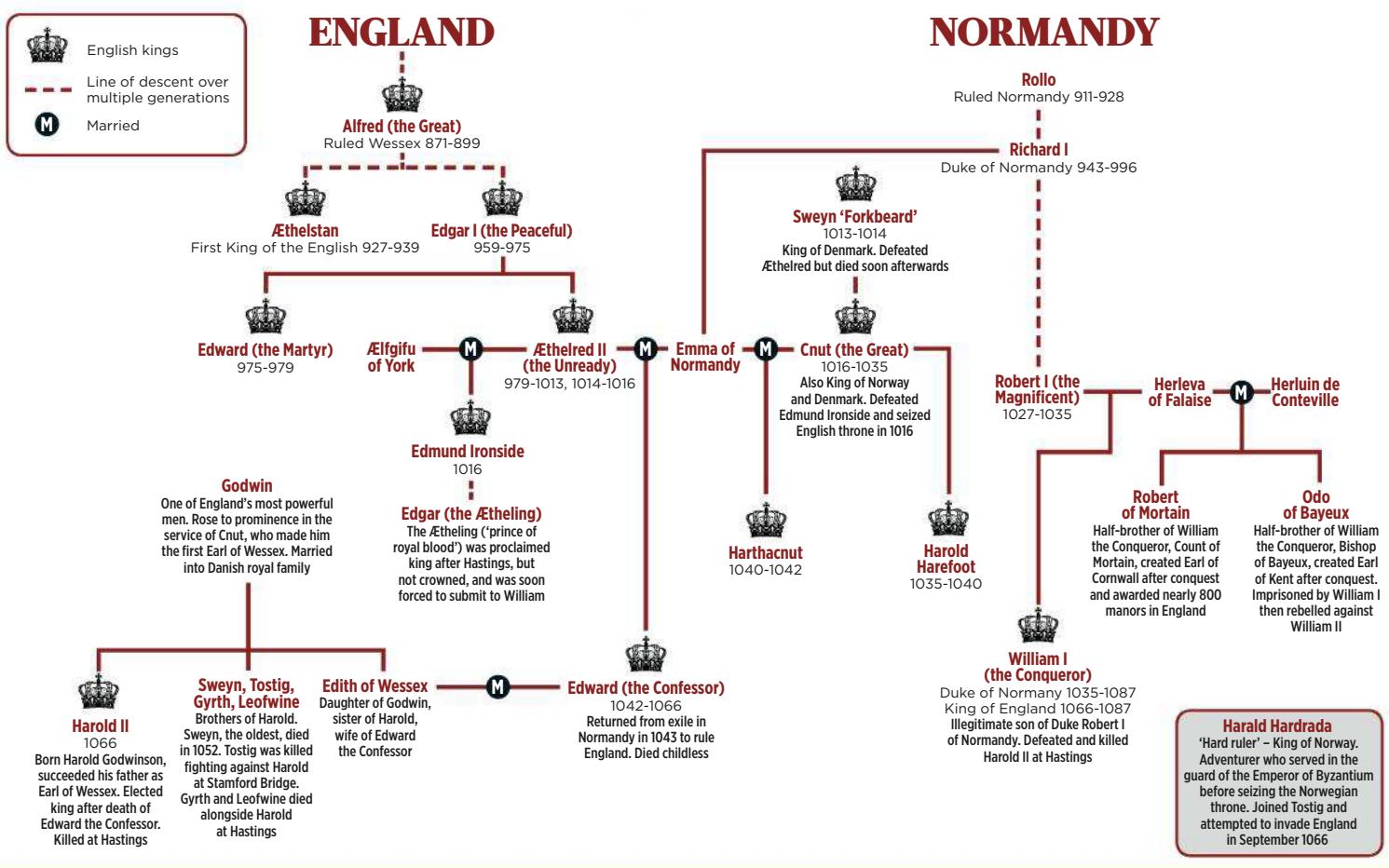
**282**

Days of Harold's reign, from coronation on 6 January to death at Hastings on 14 October

relative of the Confessor, his chief claim was his assertion that, back in 1051, Edward had promised him the throne. He backed this up by stating that Harold had, two years before Edward's death, sworn to support his succession. But though it was not uncommon for continental kings to name their successors, it was not an established practice in England.

Harald Hardrada, King of Norway, made his dubious claim based on a promise supposedly made to his predecessor on the Norwegian throne by a previous Danish King of England.

In reality, the strength of a claim to the throne meant very little without the military muscle to back it up. In 1066, the crown of England would be won by force of arms, not by any legal argument.



3

# THE INVASION

*The key to William's successful assault on England was planning*

**W**illiam of Normandy was livid when he heard that Harold Godwinson had been crowned King of England.

To William, it was not just a political challenge – it was a personal insult. Forget the fact that Edward may have named Harold as his successor on his deathbed, and that the Witan had elected the latter as king. In Williams eyes, these details did not invalidate Edward's earlier promise

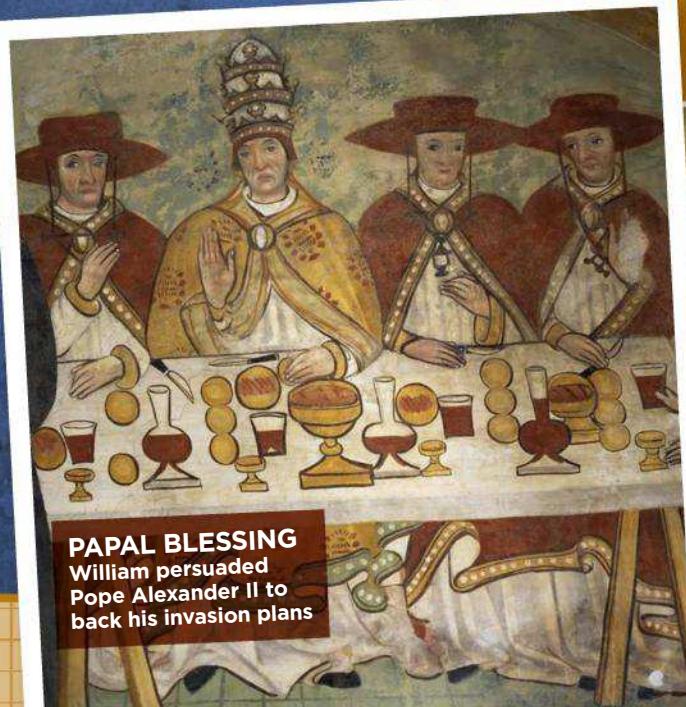
## 1 Drum up powerful backers

William and his closest advisors decided that an invasion of England was feasible – but they needed to win over the other Norman barons, whose support was vital if the attack was to succeed. However, many of these key players seem to have been decidedly lukewarm about the idea. Despite this, William persevered, and in the end his force of personality, his track record as a military commander, and the promise of land in England eventually won them over. Also, crucially, the invasion had the blessing of the Pope.

Length in miles of  
William's Channel  
crossing, from Saint-  
Valery-sur-Somme  
to Pevensey  
Bay

## 2 Get approval from the Almighty

Once he'd decided to invade England, William worked to enlist papal support. He made his case to Pope Alexander II, promising to reform the Church in England, which was seen as disorganised and corrupt. Alexander gave the plan his formal blessing and sent William a papal banner to carry. The consecration on 18 June 1066 of the Abbey aux Dames in Caen, founded by William's wife, Matilda, was intended to secure further divine support for the invasion. All of this was also important in swaying his fellow barons. The invasion now had the status of a crusade – so those taking part were not merely lining their pockets, they were saving their souls.



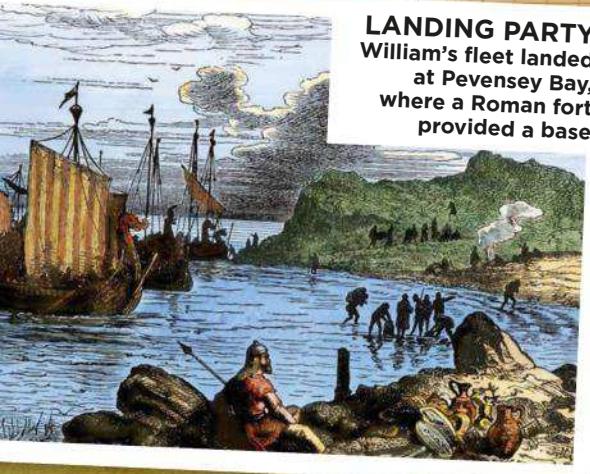
## **PAPAL BLESSING**

William persuaded Pope Alexander II to back his invasion plans

## 6 Construct a base for battle

On the morning of 28 September, William's fleet landed at Pevensey Bay in Sussex, probably sheltering in the old Roman fort. Next day, his army moved to Hastings, where they built a timber-and-earth castle as a more substantial base. Inlets either side allowed only one major approach route, so William's army was secure from surprise attack – and preparing for battle...





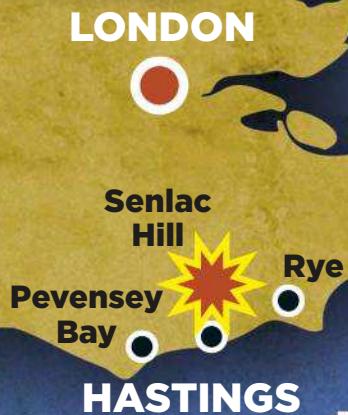
**LANDING PARTY**  
William's fleet landed at Pevensey Bay, where a Roman fort provided a base



**VIKING STYLE**  
William's longships were visual reminders of his Norse forebears

## 5 Speed across the Channel

William's cross-Channel expedition was almost certainly the largest amphibious operation since Roman times. Many of the Normans, Bretons and Flemish in his invasion force would have been experienced mariners, but even so, the vagaries of wind, weather and tides made it a tricky undertaking. William initially assembled his fleet at Dives-sur-Mer, north-east of Caen, but was delayed by unfavourable winds. In fact, this may have worked in his favour. Harold had assembled a fleet of his own to intercept the Normans, but ran out of supplies while awaiting the invasion and was forced to disband it – leaving William with free run of the Channel. On 12 September, he moved his fleet 150 miles up the coast to Saint-Valery-sur-Somme, where the crossing was much shorter. On 27 September, two days after Harold had destroyed a Viking army at Stamford Bridge (overleaf), William set sail.



### Mast from the past

The Bayeux Tapestry depicts **triangular sails on William's fleet**. This replica ship was built in 2008 to show these spinnaker sails were ideal for the invasion

Bayeux • Dives-sur-Mer  
CAEN

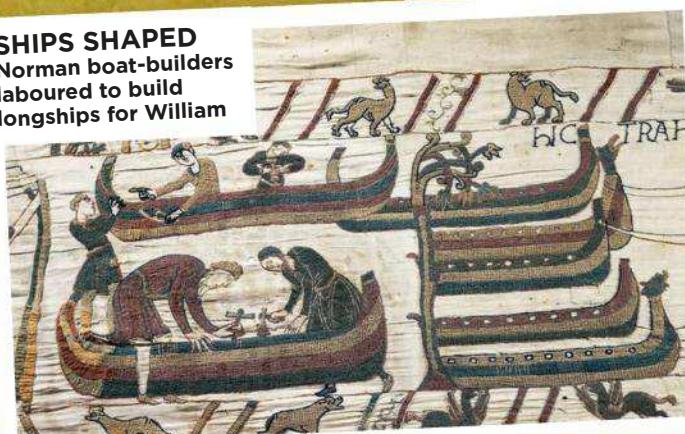
NORMANDY

Mortain

## 3 Recruit a king-size army

William cast his net far and wide to raise the army he needed to conquer England. The core of his force comprised soldiers from his Duchy of Normandy but substantial contingents also joined him from Brittany, Flanders, Picardy and elsewhere in France. Eventually, perhaps 8,000 men were assembled and ready to cross the Channel.

**SHIPS SHAPED**  
Norman boat-builders laboured to build longships for William



are shown on the Tapestry. A large ship of that period could carry 40 to 45 armed men (not counting the ship's crew), or ten to 12 knights with their horses.

## 4 Build a fearsome fleet of ships

The Bayeux Tapestry depicts scenes of frantic activity as trees are felled and Viking-style longships are built to carry William's men, horses and equipment across the Channel. Many of the ships, provided by William's fellow barons, probably already existed. William's half-brothers, Robert of Mortain and Odo of Bayeux, are said to have supplied 120 and 100 ships, respectively. According to the Norman poet and historian Wace, 696 ships were needed to transport the army. This suggests that some of the vessels were little more than fishing smacks – and, indeed, some of these

PICARDY

FLANDERS

# THE BATTLES

*The clash at Hastings was the last of three fought in less than a month*

**H**astings is probably the best-known battle in English history, but it was just one of three major actions fought in England in 1066. In fact, the first challenge to Harold's kingship came not from Normandy but from England's old nemesis: Scandinavia.

In September 1066, Harold was keeping a wary eye on William's preparations across the Channel. But more trouble was brewing across the North Sea – and partly of Harold's own making.

**250**

Distance in miles  
Harold marched from Stamford Bridge to Hastings

A year earlier, Harold's younger brother, Tostig – at the time, Earl of Northumbria – faced a rebellion.

Keen to keep England united in the face of the Norman threat, Harold sided with the rebels and Tostig was outlawed. In summer 1066, Tostig pledged to support fierce King Harald Hardrada of Norway, who believed he had a claim to the throne, in an invasion of England.

So, in September, Harald crossed the North Sea and sailed up the Humber...



## WEAPONS OF WAR

Harold's army consisted entirely of infantry, while William had cavalry (sporting simple prick spurs [1]) and more archers. Both armies wore spangenhelme [2] – conical strap helmets that had been in popular use across Europe for several centuries. The main weapons were spears [3], typically over 2 metres long, as well as clubs, maces and, among the English, battleaxes.

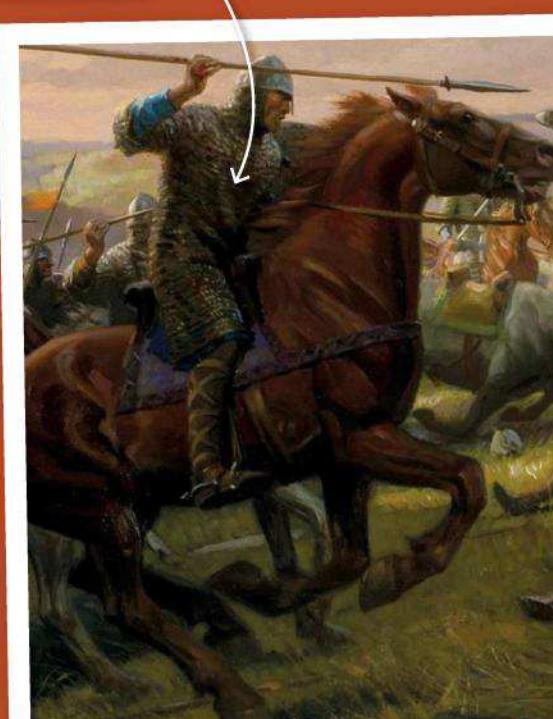
## SPEARS OF DESTINY

William's horsemen wielded **lances and kite-shaped shields**, plus maces or swords. Successive cavalry attacks and rounds of arrows thinned out the English shield wall before the main charge.



## NORSE POWER

Harald Hardrada's army likely consisted of about **10,000 men**, two-thirds of whom fought at Fulford.



20 SEPTEMBER

## THE BATTLE OF FULFORD



When Harold heard that Harald Hardrada and Tostig had landed in Yorkshire, he headed north to tackle them. But Earls Edwin of Mercia and Morcar of Northumbria had raised forces of their own. They marched off to confront the invaders, meeting them at Fulford, just south of York. The English seem to have taken up a strong defensive position at a ford, their flanks protected by a marsh and the tidal waters of the River Ouse. Little is known about the fighting, though reports

suggest that the English initially had the upper hand. Hardrada then outflanked them, possibly using an old Roman road that crossed the marsh, and drove them back in disorder. York, possibly because of its Viking roots, received the invaders favourably. After an exchange of hostages, the Norwegians returned to their ships at Riccall. They were promised that tribute money and more hostages would be brought to them a few days later at Stamford Bridge, a crossing of the Derwent, 8 miles east of York.

## RIDE AND CONQUER

**MAIN:** William's cavalry proved to be a crucial advantage over Harold's all-infantry army  
**RIGHT:** Popular re-enactments replicate the fateful clash at Battle Abbey

25 SEPTEMBER

## THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD BRIDGE



The Norwegians were unaware that Harold and his army were marching north towards them. So when they set off to collect their tributes and hostages at Stamford Bridge, they left a third of their army at their camp at Riccall. What's more, though they brought their helmets and weapons, the hot weather persuaded them to leave their mail shirts behind.

Having covered over 200 miles in less than a week, Harold's army reached York on the morning of 25 September. Marching on Stamford Bridge, they took the Viking would-be invaders completely by surprise.

Hardrada had deployed the bulk of his army on the river's east (far) bank, so in order to get at them, the

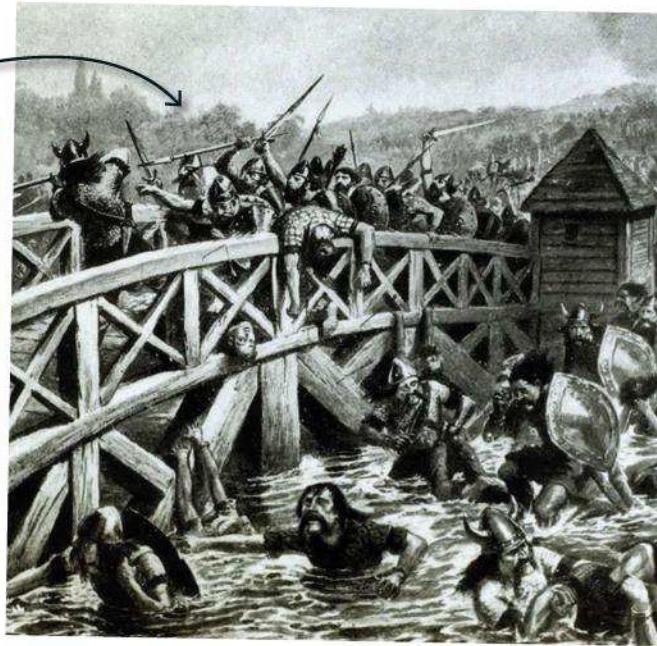
### A BRIDGE TOO FAR

Reports tell us that Harald Hardrada's **biggest Viking warrior** stood his ground on the bridge and held off the English army – till he was slain by a spear from below.

English had to fight their way across the bridge. Some sources say that one giant Viking warrior held the entire English army at bay on the bridge – till he was laid low by a well-aimed spear thrust through the bridge's planks by an Englishman floating in a wooden tub beneath him.

The English then surged across the bridge. After a fierce hand-to-hand fight with axes, spears and swords, the outnumbered and unarmoured Vikings broke and fled back towards Riccall. Few made it there alive. Of the 200 ships that carried the invaders to England, only 24 sailed home with survivors. Both Hardrada and Tostig were among the slain.

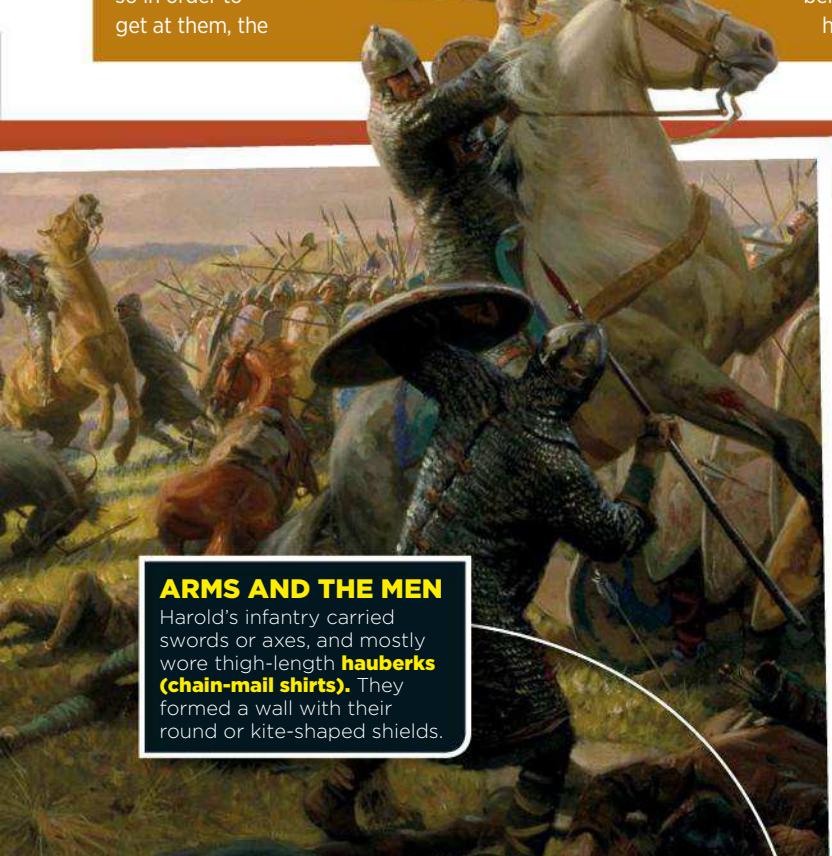
But Harold had no time to rest. On 1 October, he heard that William had landed at Pevensey Bay. To provoke Harold into fighting before he had time to reinforce his army, William ravaged the



### UP THE CREEK

**The Norwegians were weakened, having left men and armour at base**

countryside. Harold hurried south, waiting just a few days in London for more troops to join him. On 11 October, having dispatched ships to cut off the Norman retreat, he marched on Hastings.



### ARMS AND THE MEN

Harold's infantry carried swords or axes, and mostly wore thigh-length **hauberks** (chain-mail shirts). They formed a wall with their round or kite-shaped shields.

14 OCTOBER

## THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS



If Harold hoped to catch the Normans by surprise at their camp, he was to be disappointed. William's scouts had warned their leader of his approach, and the Normans advanced on Harold. He took up a defensive position on Senlac Hill, the ridge where Battle Abbey now stands, and waited for the Normans to come to him.

William deployed Bretons at the left of his army, soldiers from France, Flanders and Picardy on the right, with his own Norman troops in the centre. His archers and crossbowmen stood in the front ranks, with more heavily armoured infantry behind them. The cavalry were deployed to the rear. Clearly, William's plan was to soften up the English lines by raining arrows down on them before the infantry and cavalry moved in to finish the job.

But the English held firm behind their wall of shields, and the initial Norman attacks made little impression on them. A section of William's army gave way and poured back down the slope, pursued by some of Harold's men. A rumour spread that William had been killed, and soon his entire army was in danger of collapse. He responded swiftly. Riding among his men, he pushed back his helmet to show that he was still alive. Heartened, his men rallied, turning on their scattered English pursuers and cutting them down. Indeed, it is possible that the Normans feigned retreat to draw more English from the hill.

Casualties mounted on both sides, including Harold's brothers Gyth and Leofwine. Eventually, the relentless combination of archery with infantry and cavalry attacks thinned the English ranks enough for the Norman knights to break through the shield wall. Harold, possibly wounded in the eye by an arrow (though early accounts make no mention of this), was hacked to pieces, and the English line disintegrated. Some of Harold's men may have made a last stand near a ravine called the Malfosse ('evil ditch') – but for the English, the day was lost.

**HAROLD'S MEN MADE A LAST STAND, BUT THE DAY WAS LOST**



# THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY

*One of Britain's greatest surviving historical sources*

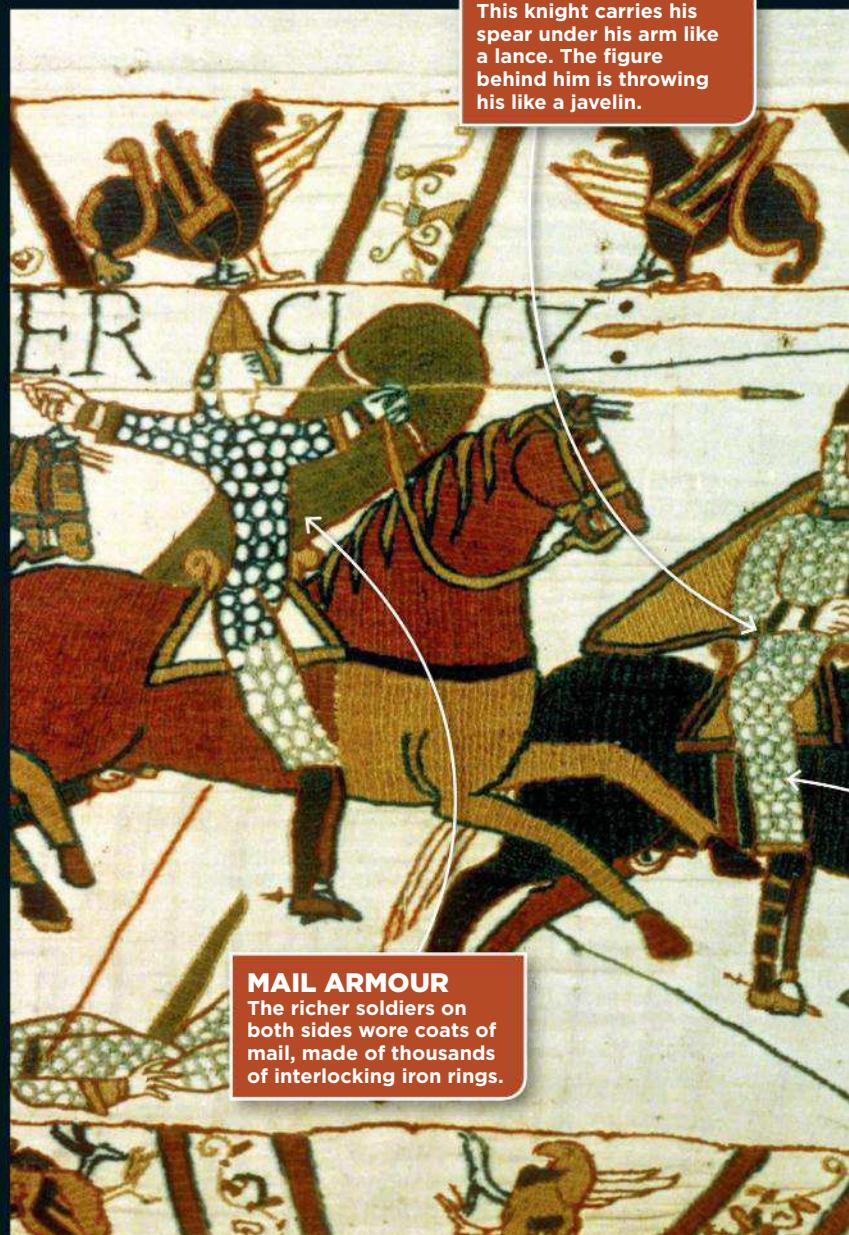
The most famous tapestry in the world isn't actually a tapestry – rather, it's an embroidered strip of linen 68 metres long and half a metre wide. It depicts the events leading up to and including the Battle of Hastings, mainly from a Norman point of view. The original may have shown more, but the end is now missing. It may have

been designed by an English artist and embroidered at a workshop at St Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury.

**626**

human figures, 190 horses, 35 dogs, 506 other birds and animals, 33 buildings, 37 ships and four instances of full-frontal nudity

The fact that he appears quite prominently in its images suggests that the Tapestry was probably commissioned by Odo of Bayeux, one of William's half-brothers, and may have been intended to be hung in the new cathedral in that city on the Normandy coast.



## MAIL ARMOUR

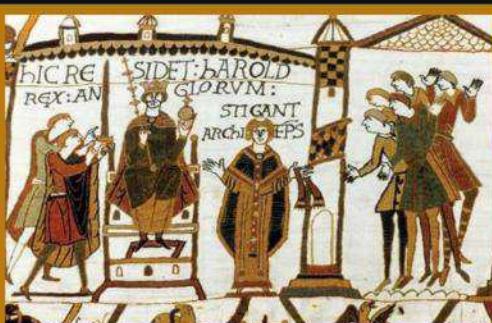
The richer soldiers on both sides wore coats of mail, made of thousands of interlocking iron rings.

## THE TAPESTRY WAS PROBABLY EMBROIDERED AND DESIGNED IN ENGLAND



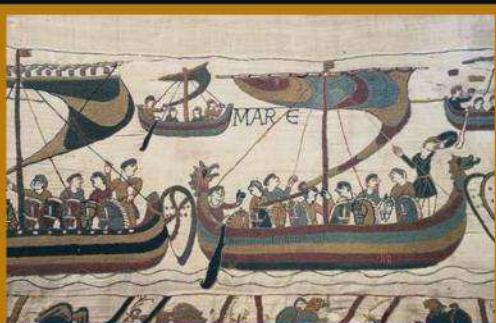
### FATEFUL OATH

A moustached Harold places his hands on boxes of holy relics as he swears an oath to help William become King of England. French accounts say Harold was sent to France by Edward the Confessor in 1064, but was seized by Guy of Ponthieu before being rescued by William and joining him in his campaign against Conan of Brittany. He then swore an oath at Bonneville-sur-Touques, near Deauville, although the Tapestry depicts the event taking place at Bayeux.



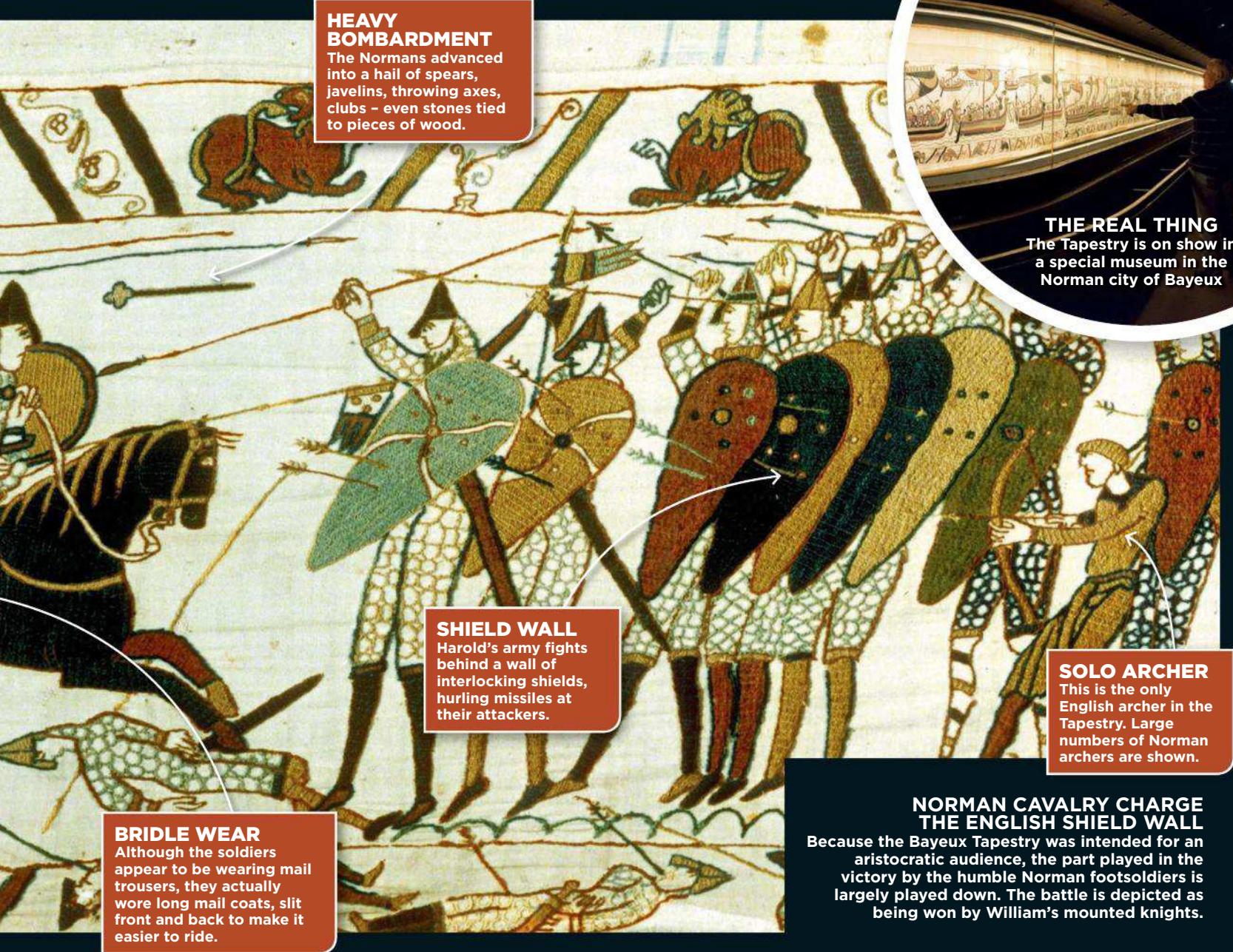
### HURRIED CORONATION

Edward the Confessor died on 5 January, and Harold was crowned in Westminster the following day. Harold is depicted wearing a crown and carrying an orb and sceptre while one of his supporters holds the sword of state. Harold was probably crowned by Ealdred, the Archbishop of York, but the Tapestry shows Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury next to him. This was most likely in order to make the coronation seem improper, as Stigand had been excommunicated by the Pope.

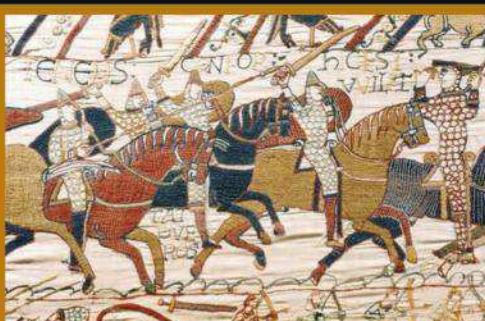
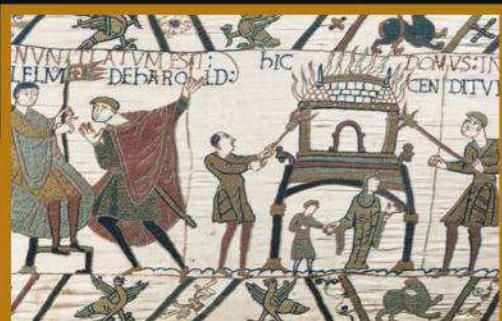


### CROSSING THE CHANNEL

Nearly 700 ships of varying sizes were needed to transport William's army across the Channel, together with its equipment and, as shown here, its horses. Some of the vessels may well have been small fishing boats like the one shown in the background here. One man guides the ship on the right with a steering board (hence starboard) while another keeps a lookout for land.



**NORMAN CAVALRY CHARGE THE ENGLISH SHIELD WALL**  
Because the Bayeux Tapestry was intended for an aristocratic audience, the part played in the victory by the humble Norman footsoldiers is largely played down. The battle is depicted as being won by William's mounted knights.



## SCORCHED EARTH

After landing at Pevensey, William moved to Hastings where he set up camp and built a castle. To provoke Harold into fighting before all his forces were assembled, he ordered his men to lay waste to the surrounding area. On the left, William receives news that Harold is approaching, while on the right his men set fire to a building. A woman and child either flee the burning house or are trapped in the flames.

## WILLIAM RALLIES THE TROOPS

The Battle of Hastings began on the morning of 14 October. The Normans' initial attacks went badly and their troops were beaten back by the English. Panic set in as rumour spread that William had been killed. Here, the Tapestry shows William holding a mace and rallying his troops, tilting back his helmet to show he was alive.

## DEATH OF HAROLD

There has been a lot of debate over which of these two figures is Harold. Some people argue that they are both meant to be Harold, first wounded by an arrow and then cut down. But engravings of the Tapestry before it was restored in the 19th century show the figure on the left holding what looks like a javelin. It seems likely that the arrow was added in the 19th century and that the falling figure is in fact the slain King.

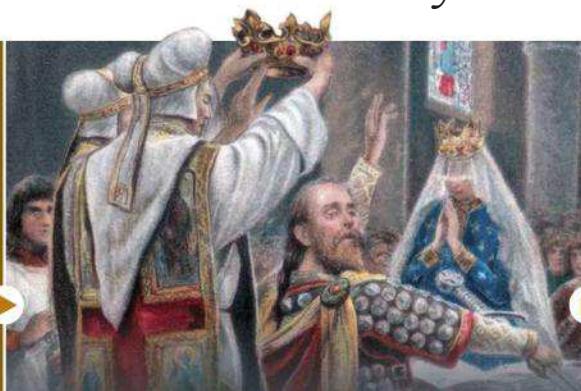
# TIMELINE

# The Norman

Follow the tumultuous half-century that saw England riven by rivals and an

**1035**

An 8-year-old boy, William, becomes Duke of Normandy. After surviving early years of control and conflict, he gradually tightens his grip over the Duchy with French help, putting down a major rebellion near Caen in 1047.



**1042**

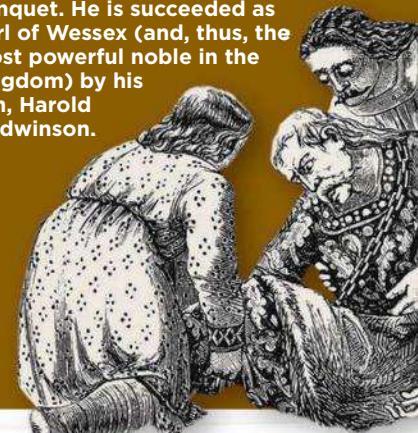
After spending much of his early life in exile in Normandy, Edward the Confessor becomes King of England. In 1045, he marries Edith, daughter of the powerful Earl of Wessex, Godwin. The marriage produces no children.

**1051**

Edward the Confessor promises the throne of England to William of Normandy. Earl Godwin and his family are sent into exile, but return the following year to reclaim their lands.

**15 APRIL 1053**

Earl Godwin dies after suffering a stroke at a banquet. He is succeeded as Earl of Wessex (and, thus, the most powerful noble in the kingdom) by his son, Harold Godwinson.



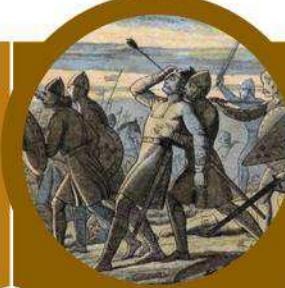
**DECEMBER 1066**

English leaders including Edgar submit to William at Berkhamsted. On Christmas Day, William of Normandy is crowned King of England in Westminster Abbey.



**OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1066**

Edgar the Ætheling is declared King by the Witan, but is not crowned. William's troops advance on London but are halted at London Bridge. He leads his army through south-east England, burning and pillaging, depriving London of its food supplies.



**14 OCTOBER 1066**

William defeats the English at the Battle of Hastings. Harold, his brothers Gyrth and Leofwine, and many other English leaders are killed.

**28 SEPTEMBER 1066**

William of Normandy lands his army at Pevensey Bay in Sussex, and begins ravaging the surrounding area. Harold is informed and heads south to confront William.

Harold's army defeats the Norwegians at Stamford Bridge



**AUTUMN 1067**

Having sailed home to Normandy in 1067, William returns to England that same year to deal with resistance. He negotiates the surrender of Exeter after an 18-day siege. Led by Harold's mother, Gytha, Exeter had been a centre of opposition to Norman rule.

**WINTER 1069-70**

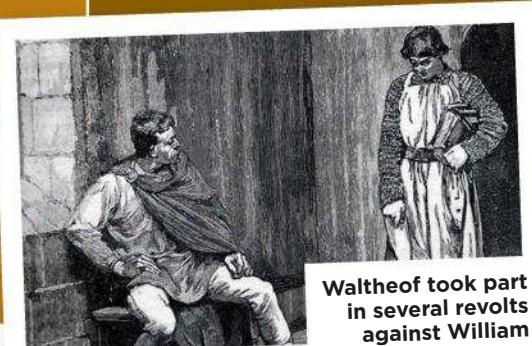
Having faced three rebellions in two years, William brutally suppresses opposition in the North of England. In a campaign known later as 'the Harrying of the North', he systematically lays waste to extensive areas of land.

**1072**

William invades Scotland and forces King Malcolm III, who had been raiding England and supporting rebellions against him, to accept the peace of Abernathy and become William's vassal.

**1075**

William suppresses the so-called Revolt of the Earls, led by Ralph of East Anglia, Roger of Hereford and Waltheof, the last remaining English earl, who is executed.



Waltheof took part in several revolts against William



# conquest of England

illegitimate boy rise to reign on both sides of the Channel

**1055**

Harold's younger brother Tostig becomes Earl of Northumbria. Another brother, Gyth, becomes Earl of East Anglia. Two years later a third brother, Leofwine, is given an earldom in the home counties.



**1064**

Harold meets Duke William in Normandy. According to Norman accounts, Harold promises to support William in his claim to succeed Edward the Confessor as King of England.

**OCTOBER 1065**

Northern rebels overthrow Tostig as Earl of Northumbria, forcing him into exile. After Harold fails to support him, and accepts Morcar as the new Earl, Tostig plots revenge against his brother.



**MEANWHILE IN MEXICO...**  
The Mayan city of Chichén Itzá was under construction

**25 SEPTEMBER 1066**

After a lightning march north, Harold surprises and defeats the Norwegians at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, east of York. Both Harald Hardrada and Tostig are killed in the clash. This marks the end of the Viking Age in Britain.



**20 SEPTEMBER 1066**

Supported by Tostig, King Harald Hardrada of Norway lands in Yorkshire, defeats the combined forces of Mercia and Northumbria at Fulford and enters York.

**5 JANUARY 1066**

Edward the Confessor dies. Harold Godwinson is elected king by the Witan (the Anglo-Saxon Council of Nobles) and is crowned the following day, probably in Westminster Abbey. On hearing the news, William begins assembling an army and fleet, intending to invade England.

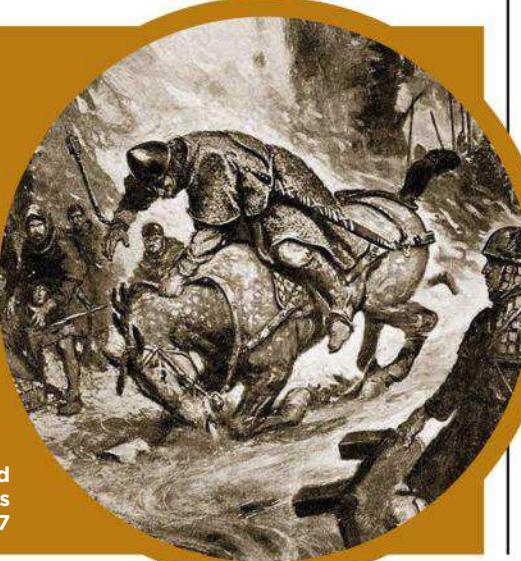
**DECEMBER 1085**

Faced with an invasion by Cnut II of Denmark, William commissions Domesday Book, a survey of the resources and land ownership of his new kingdom. It is largely completed by the following summer.

**9 SEPTEMBER 1087**

William dies during a campaign in France, having been injured while fighting on horseback. He is 59, and ruled England for 21 years. He leaves Normandy to his eldest son, Robert, and England to his third, William II, known as 'Rufus'.

William is fatally injured while sacking Mantes on 15 August 1087

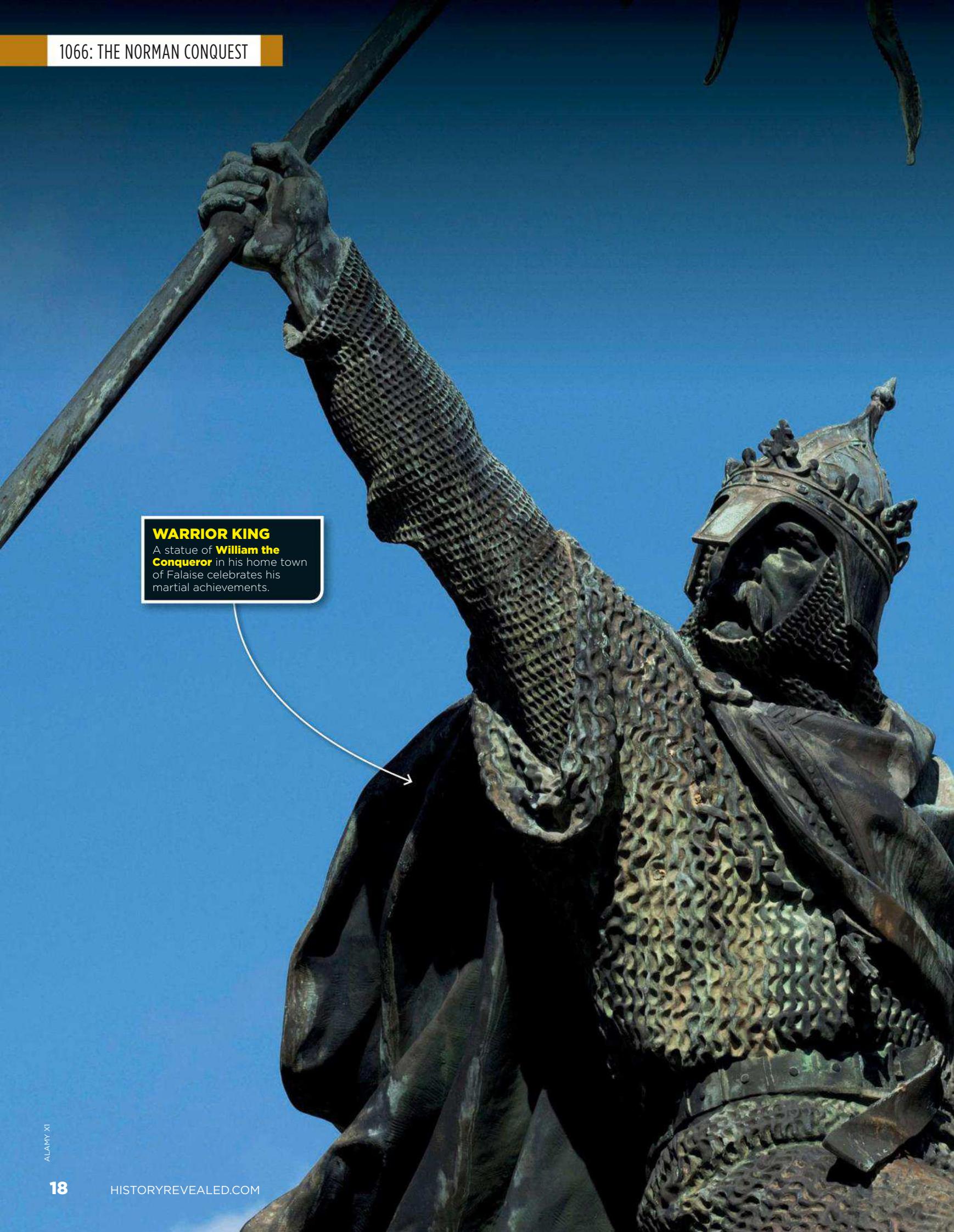


## NEWS OF THE WORLD

ELSEWHERE IN 1066...

England and Normandy weren't the only places riven with conflict in the mid-11th century. Other Norman warriors were conquering southern Italy, and battling in Sicily during the 1060s. Islamic dynasties and empires had spread across the Middle East, North Africa and into Europe, and were now battling in various regions. The Seljuks had swept into Syria and the Caucasus, taking Georgia, and would go on to invade the Byzantine Empire in 1067, capturing most of Asia Minor (now known as Anatolia, the Asian portion of Turkey).

Nor was everything peaceful in South-East Asia. The Champa Kingdom of what's now central Vietnam, having been defeated by the Dai Viet, were paying tribute to their enemy – but would rise up against them in 1068, only to suffer another catastrophic defeat. The Chola Dynasty of southern India was building its power base, sending raiding parties to today's Sri Lanka, Malaysia and elsewhere in South-East Asia. In Central America, the Maya were still flourishing in the Yucatán: the pyramid called El Castillo was built at Chichén Itzá around this time.





# WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

At first, the new King tried to rule with the co-operation of his subjects, but when they rebelled he could be capable of extreme violence



**D**espite his great victory at Hastings on 14 October 1066, William wasn't to enter London for another two months. After resting at Hastings, his army captured Dover and then, after recovering from an outbreak of dysentery, received the surrender of Canterbury.

When a detachment of William's cavalry found London Bridge defended against them he opted against a full-blown assault on the capital. He instead embarked on a destructive march through Surrey and Hampshire. Burning and pillaging as they went, his troops captured the royal treasure at Winchester. By mid-November William's troops had crossed the Thames, and were based at Wallingford.

Edwin and Morcar, the two northern earls who had earlier been defeated at Fulford, attempted to rally the English around the young Edgar Aethling, a grandson of the late King Edmund Ironside. Edgar was proclaimed king, but without the leadership of the powerful Godwin family, English resistance rapidly began to crumble. Edwin and Morcar withdrew

northwards, while Stigand, the archbishop of Canterbury, deserted Edgar. In mid-December the remaining English leaders in London submitted to William at Berkhamsted.

On Christmas Day 1066, William was crowned in Westminster Abbey. Mistaking English shouts of acclamation for a riot, his soldiers set fire to surrounding buildings. The service was concluded

left his half-brother Odo of Bayeux, whom he made Earl of the important county of Kent, and William FitzOsbern. Apart from an attack on Dover by William's old comrade Eustace of Boulogne and a couple of local raids, including one on Hereford by the splendidly-named Eadric the Wild, who had fallen out with the local Normans, things were relatively quiet throughout most of 1067.

But trouble was in the air. In the early months of his reign, William seems to have done everything he could to persuade his new English subjects that he intended to rule with their co-operation, as well as with the support of those who had accompanied him to England. While he had seized the lands of those

## IT TOOK FIVE YEARS OF BRUTAL CAMPAIGNING BEFORE WILLIAM WAS ABLE TO ESTABLISH CONTROL OVER ALL OF ENGLAND

amid clouds of smoke, the new King shaking like a leaf. Defeat at Hastings had cost the English their best chance of stopping the invasion and deprived them of some of their best leaders but it took another five years of brutal campaigning, especially in the North, before William was able to establish control over all of England.

In March 1067, William returned to Normandy where Matilda, his wife, had been looking after affairs in his absence. To oversee England he

### KING AT CHRISTMAS

William had himself crowned on Christmas Day 1066 in a ceremony that descended into chaos when his soldiers thought there was a riot. While he was in England, his wife **Matilda** (inset) ruled as regent in Normandy.



### THE RIGHTFUL KING

The coronation, held in Westminster Abbey amid tight security and before he had secured the country, emphasised William's belief that he was the rightful heir to the throne.

who fought against him at Hastings, every Englishman who remained loyal would retain his ancestral property. However, the English resented the incomers' desire to grab as much land and wealth as they could. Senior magnates felt they were not getting the treatment their rank deserved and William's imposition of a heavy tax in order to pay his troops caused increasing discontent.

In spring 1068, the first major anti-Norman rebellion broke out, in Exeter, a well-fortified city sheltering Harold's mother, Gytha. William took the rebellion seriously for he hurried back from Normandy, crossing the Channel in December, an extremely risky time to do so. With an army of Norman knights and English levies, he marched into Devon and laid siege to the city, which surrendered after 18 days. Although his army had suffered severely in the cold winter weather, William treated the city relatively leniently. He ordered the construction of a large castle inside its walls before going off to subdue the rest of Devon and Cornwall.

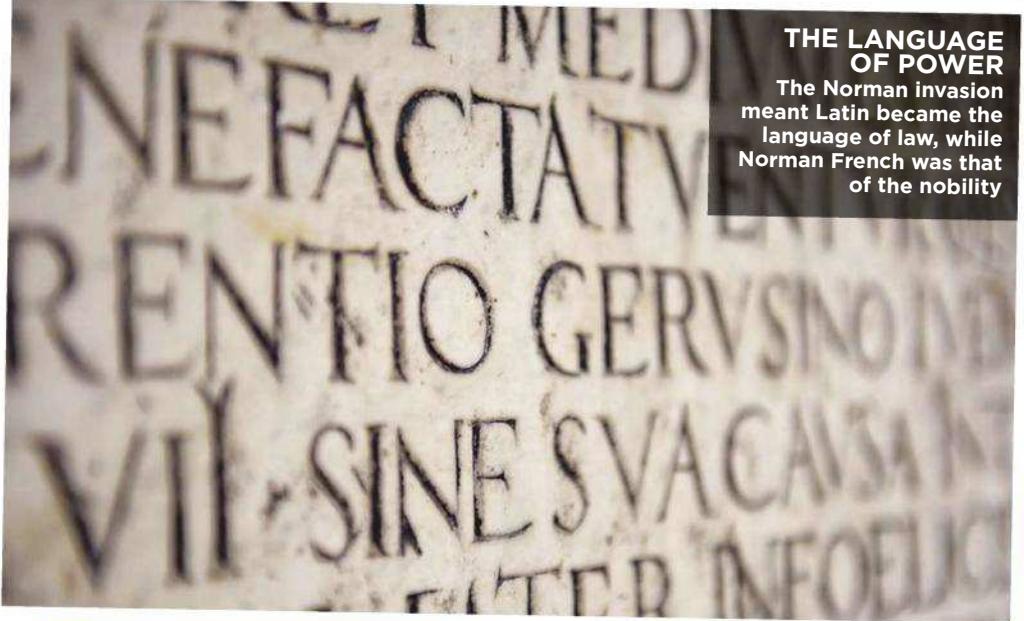
### CASTLE-BUILDING POLICY

William then set out to impose his authority on the Midlands, where Edwin and Morcar briefly defied him, and Yorkshire. As at Exeter, he did this by having castles built at important sites like Warwick, York, Lincoln and Cambridge, and installing garrisons in them. But it soon became clear that the English, or at least some of them, weren't going to take this lying down.

In January 1069, the Northumbrians rose against Robert de Commines, their newly-installed Norman Earl. They stormed Durham and killed all the foreigners they could find, including Commines, who was burned to death as he sought refuge in the Bishop's house. The rebellion rapidly spread to York, where the Norman defenders of the castle were able to get a message to William asking him for help. They gave the worrying news that the rebels were calling Edgar Aethling their king and were being helped by Malcolm, King of Scots.

William was in Normandy when the news reached him and again hurried back. He marched to York, catching the rebels by surprise and scattering their forces. After repairing York castle and ordering the construction of an additional one, he returned south to spend Easter in Winchester.

These were troubled times for William and he took the precaution of sending his wife Matilda and his eldest son Robert, both then in England, back to Normandy. That summer Godwin, the son of the late king Harold, arrived with a small fleet and landed in south Devon. He probably intended to attack Tavistock but was surprised by forces loyal to William and driven off having suffered heavy losses. Meanwhile there were further rebellions in the South West and on the Welsh border, where



### THE LANGUAGE OF POWER

The Norman invasion meant Latin became the language of law, while Norman French was that of the nobility

## HOW THE NORMANS GAVE US LATIN

The problem was that William didn't speak English

The Norman Conquest led to closer political and economic ties with northwest Europe rather than with Scandinavia. It brought a French-speaking elite and major changes in language. Before the Conquest, English was spoken and used for official documents. But England's new Norman overlords didn't speak it (William tried to learn, but soon gave up) so there was little point having documents users couldn't understand. From about 1070, all charters, writs and official documents were in Latin, a language that educated people across Europe could understand. Today, legal terms still tend to be Latin

in origin, such as *a priori* (meaning an argument derived from previous event) or *de jure* (concerning the law).

French was the everyday language of the nobility and this has affected the language we speak today. Many words denoting luxury have a French origin: for example, milk is an English word, cream is French. The names of farm animals in the field tend to be English in origin (such as pig or cow) until they reach the table when they become French (pork or beef).

Lower down the social scale, which meant for most people in the country, English was still the language in daily use.

Eadric the Wild was up to his old tricks again, attacking and burning Shrewsbury.

But the biggest danger was again in the North, where the rebels had been joined by Danish forces under the command of Asbjorn, the brother of King Sweyn II of Denmark. Once again York declared for Edgar although its two castles remained in the hands of forces loyal to William. On 19 September, the castle garrisons tried to improve their defences by clearing the ground around their ramparts but only succeeded in causing a fire that badly damaged the city and destroyed St Peter's Cathedral.

When their castles were stormed two days later, the garrisons were shown little mercy by the rebels. With the exception of the two castellans and their families, who were held for ransom, they were all put to the sword.

William, who had been hunting in the Forest of Dean when the rebellion flared up, yet again marched north. Heavy rain delayed him and when he eventually reached York he found its charred ruins deserted. The rebels had withdrawn, and the Danes had returned to their ships on the Humber and were, in effect, unreachable.

Determined to break this cycle of rebellion, William took drastic and brutal action. He paid the Danes to go away and then turned his attention to the region itself, ordering his soldiers to punish the rebels and deny them supplies by killing the population, burning villages, seizing or destroying food and laying waste to land. In what became known as 'the Harrying of the North', large areas of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire and Staffordshire were laid waste and thousands of people were forced from their homes or starved.

Such ravaging was not uncommon in warfare of the time but the sheer scale of it seems

500  
The number of castles built in England during William the Conqueror's reign

# MASTER BUILDERS

How the Normans transformed England's buildings

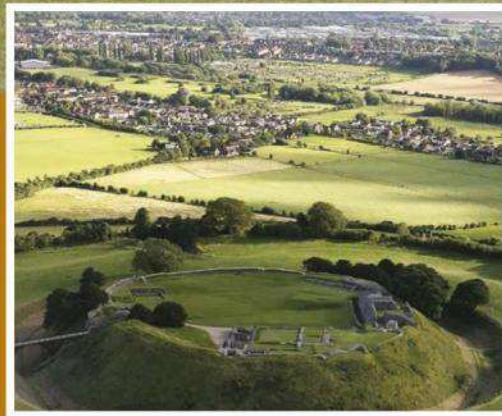
Although a few castles had been built by Norman settlers during the reign of Edward the Confessor, after the Battle of Hastings came a surge of castle building in England. William was faced with a hostile population, periodic rebellions, Scottish and Welsh raids, and Scandinavian invasions. The widespread construction of castles was to be a major factor in the Normans' success in conquering and holding the country. Castles served as

bases for military operations, as refuges in the event of rebellion, as administrative centres, and as symbols of Norman dominance. Archaeological evidence suggests that over 500 castles were built during the reign of the Conqueror. Although some were 'ringworks' – enclosures defended by a ditch, bank and palisade – the majority were motte and bailey, consisting of an earthen mound topped with a

## MOTTE AND BAILEY CASTLE

While we often think of great stone keeps as being typical of the period, the Norman conquerors needed to build in a hurry, so the vast majority of **their early castles were constructed of wood and earth**. Lots of earthworks survive in England but the wooden buildings that once stood on them have long since disappeared.

wooden tower and surrounded by a bailey, an enclosure defended by an earth bank topped with a wooden palisade. By the 12th century, many castle builders were replacing wood with stone. Great stone towers or 'keeps' are often seen as typical 'Norman' fortification, but only those at Chepstow, Colchester and the Tower of London seem to have been built during William's reign.



### OLD SARUM

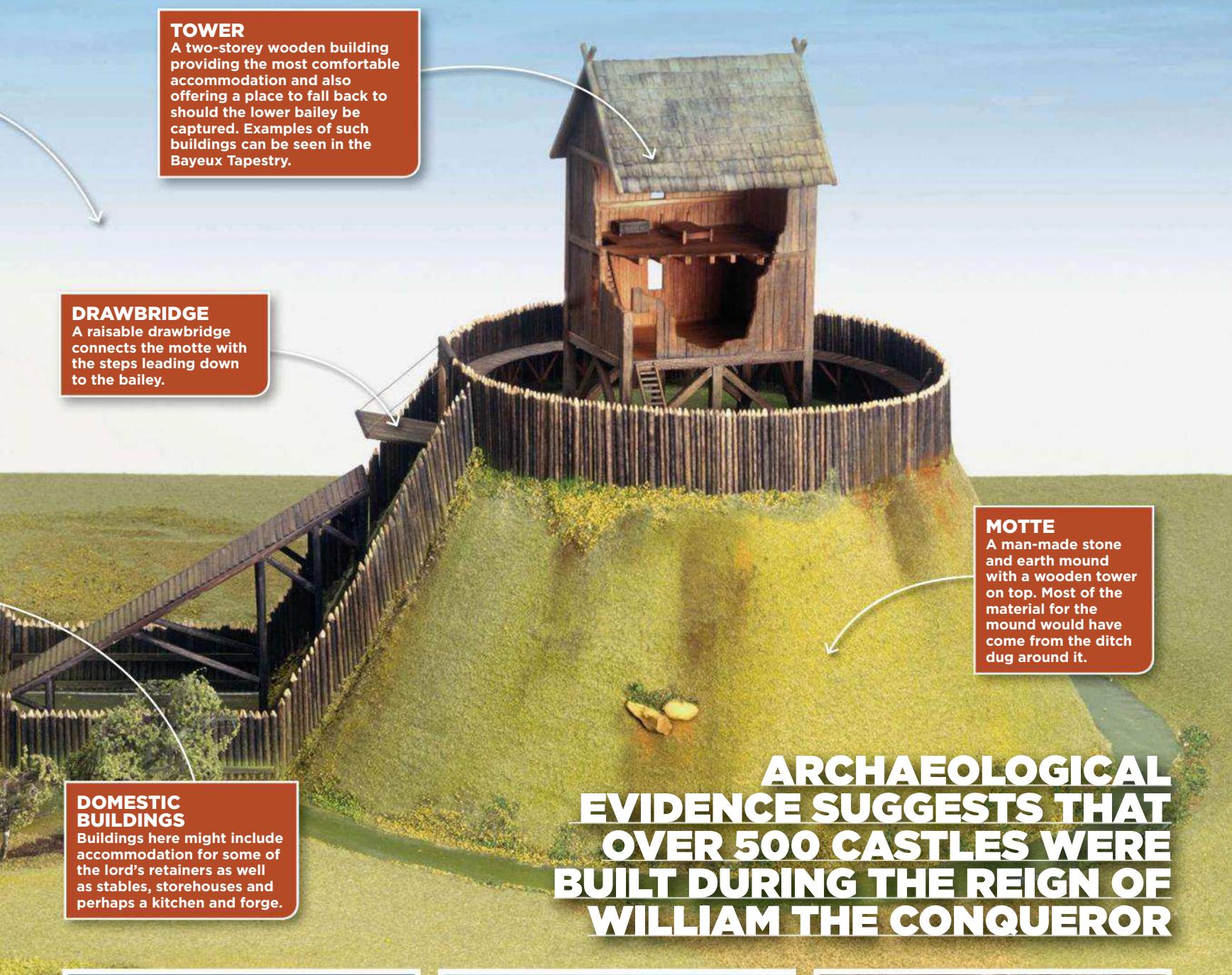
The Normans established a castle, cathedral and town within the ramparts of an Iron Age fortification and, for 150 years, it was a major centre of government. In the 13th century, the cathedral was moved to the site of what is now Salisbury (top) and the town soon followed.

### TOWER OF LONDON

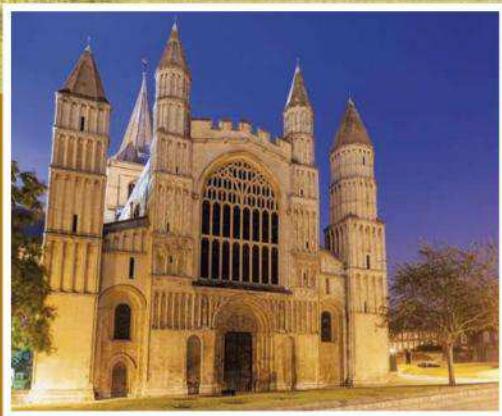
William the Conqueror built a number of strongholds to intimidate the citizens of London. The best known is the Tower of London, which takes its name from the central tower, built by Bishop Gundulf of Rochester and completed by the 1170s.

### ROCHESTER CASTLE

In 1066, a timber castle was built to control the important river crossing at Rochester. This was replaced by a stone castle in the 1080s. The great tower was begun in 1127. At 39 metres, it's the tallest Norman keep in England.

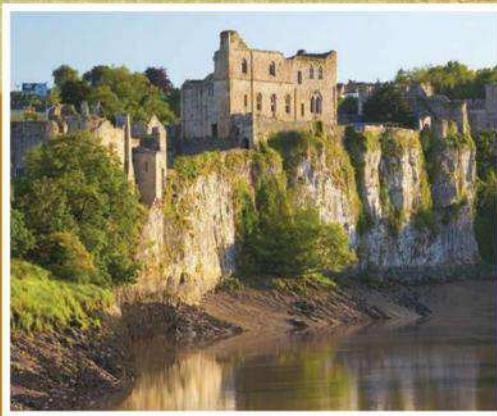


**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT OVER 500 CASTLES WERE BUILT DURING THE REIGN OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR**



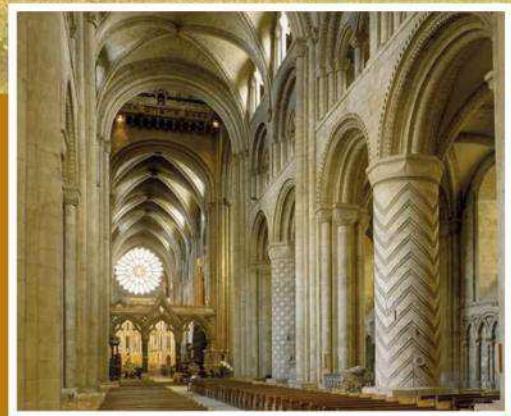
### ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

The Normans reformed the English Church, reorganising bishoprics and undertaking a major cathedral-building programme. Although the large window was added later, the west front of Rochester cathedral is a masterpiece of Norman 'Romanesque' architecture.



### NORMAN TOWER AT CHEPSTOW CASTLE

Chepstow was built in stone from the outset, probably to impress William's Welsh neighbours. The Great Hall was built partly using stone from the nearby Roman town at Caerwent. Its purpose was as much ceremonial as military.



### DURHAM CATHEDRAL

One of the glories of Norman architecture, Durham cathedral was begun in 1093 and largely completed in 40 years. It still retains its massive Norman arches and columns, which are decorated with Saxon-style linear carvings.

to have shocked contemporaries. The Anglo-Norman chronicler Orderic Vitalis wrote: "In his anger he commanded that all crops and herds, chattels and food of every kind should be brought together and burned to ashes with consuming fire, so that the whole region north of the Humber might be stripped of all sustenance. In consequence so serious a scarcity was felt in England, and so terrible a famine fell upon the humble and defenceless populace, that more than 100,000 Christian folk of both sexes, young and old alike, perished of hunger."

Some say that the effects of the Harrying of the North may have been exaggerated but the fact remains that Domesday Book, compiled 15 years after the rebellion,

describes substantial parts of the North Riding as "waste". Northern England had been cowed into submission but the fighting was not yet over.

## FENLAND REBELS

In Spring 1070, Sweyn II of Denmark arrived to take personal command of his fleet and, despite the earlier agreement to withdraw, sent troops into the Fens to join forces with English rebels led by a mysterious figure known as Hereward the Wake. Although Sweyn soon accepted a further payment from William and returned home, the Fenland rebels remained at large, protected by the marshes.

Edwin and Morcar again turned against William in 1071. Edwin was betrayed by his own men and killed but Morcar reached the

**200**  
Number of Norman barons who became the major landowners in the Kingdom.

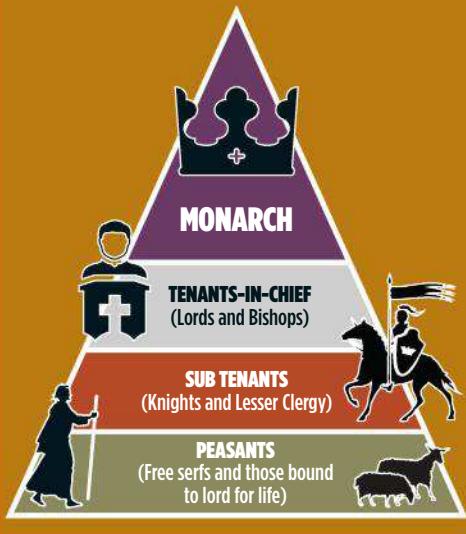
## MORE THAN 100,000 CHRISTIAN FOLK, YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE, PERISHED OF HUNGER

with Scotland. The court of Malcolm III had sheltered Edgar Atheling on several occasions and the Scots had been raiding the North of England. William's forces were too strong for the Scots, who came to terms with him at Abernethy on the River Tay. Malcolm agreed to accept William's overlordship and to expel Edgar Aethling from his court.

William was now secure on his throne but was to spend relatively little time in the kingdom he'd fought so hard to

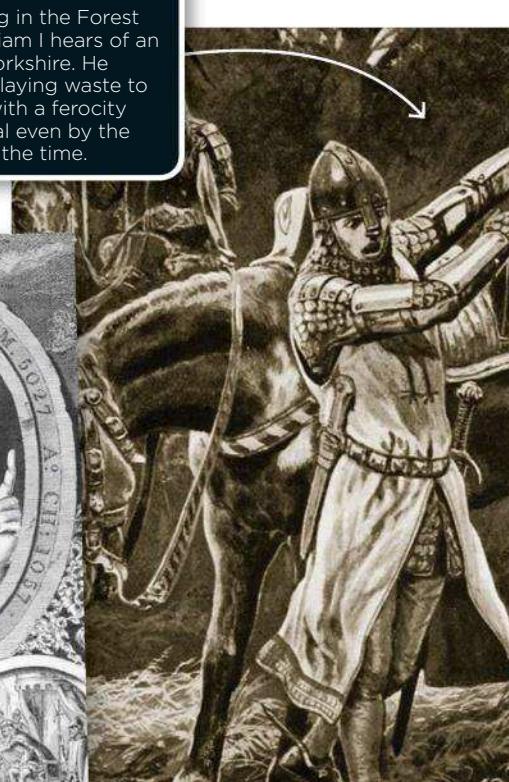
## A FEUDAL SYSTEM?

'Feudal' was a term coined by historians to describe the arrangement by which people held land from someone further up the social pyramid (see below) in exchange for service - military, administrative or labour. However, it was never a formal system and was by no means the only arrangement for landholding. It was once said the Normans introduced Feudalism into England, but it's clear that service in exchange for land took place in England long before the Conquest.



### FIGHTING SPIRIT

While hunting in the Forest of Dean, William I hears of an uprising in Yorkshire. He responds by laying waste to large areas with a ferocity seen as brutal even by the standards of the time.



**REBELLIONS AND TREATIES**  
FAR RIGHT: William gets news of the 1069 rising in the North  
RIGHT: Outnumbered, Malcolm III accepts William's overlordship in 1072



1

## DOMESDAY BOOK

One of history's most famous books is a unique record of medieval England

In 1085, when England was threatened by another Danish invasion and William needed to raise an army, he wanted to know what financial and military resources were available. He commissioned a survey to find out who owned what after the redistribution of land in the two decades since Hastings – and to find out how much was owed to him in the form of tax, rents and military service. According to a first-hand account by the Bishop of Hereford, government inspectors “made a survey of all England; of the lands in each of the counties; of the possessions of each of the magnates, their lands, their habitations, their men, both bond and free, living in huts or with their own houses or land; of ploughs, horses and other animals; of the services and payments due from each and every estate”.

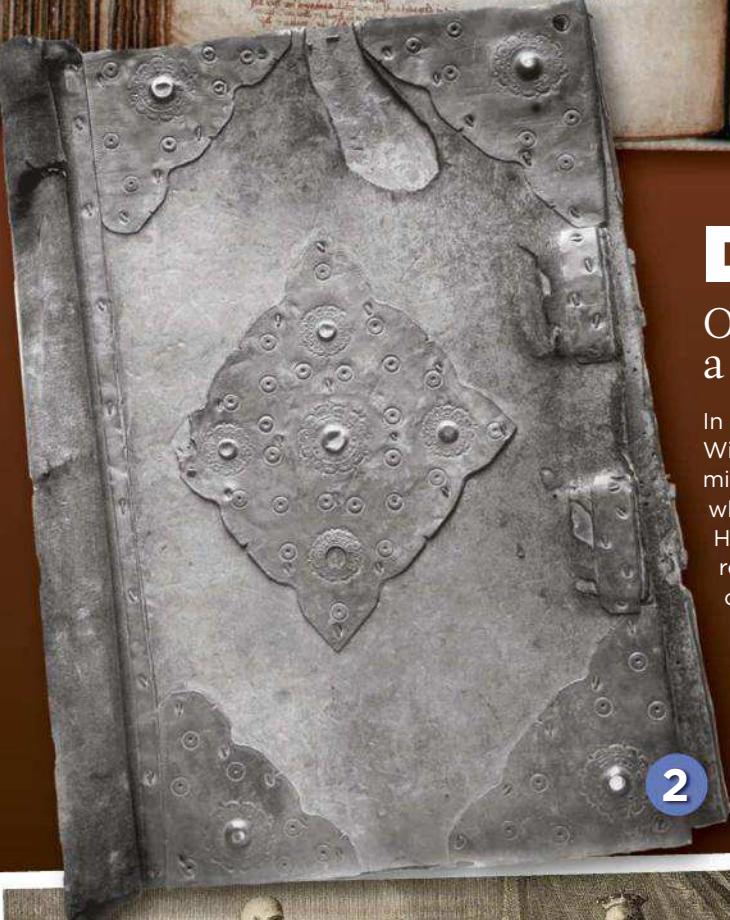
The survey was never fully completed, abandoned after William II's accession in 1087. There are also omissions, including important cities such as London, Winchester and Durham. Nevertheless Domesday

Book, the record of that survey, provides us with a remarkable snapshot of early medieval England. No other country possesses such a detailed single record from so far back in time. Although normally referred to as one book, the record is written up in two with nearly 900 pages. It was dubbed 'Domesday Book' by the English, who saw it as a kind of legal judgement.

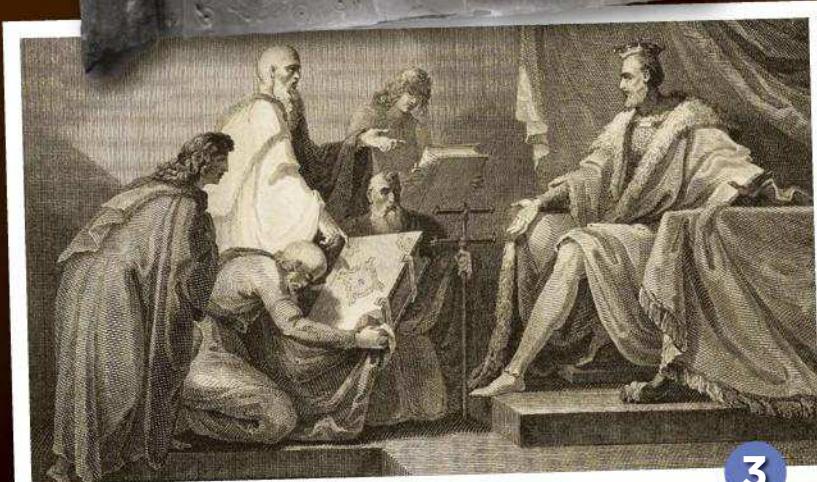
It shows that while the country was still organised into the old and extremely effective English system of shires and hundreds, land ownership had changed beyond all recognition. By 1086, only about five per cent of land in England south of the Tees was left in English hands and the 2,000 or so significant English landholders had been replaced by just 200 Norman barons.

### A BIG LIST OF THE COUNTRY'S ASSETS

- 1: Domesday Book was a 900-page list of land and property
- 2: The wood and metal cover of Domesday Book
- 3: The King is presented with the final work (note the cover) in 1086, imagined in a later engraving



2



3

**EXPERT VIEW**

**Tracy Borman** has written a biography of Queen Matilda

## WILLIAM HAD A STRONG WIFE - WITH A ROYAL PEDIGREE

### Was the Norman Conquest inevitable after Hastings?

William's triumph at Hastings was only the beginning of a long and hard-fought campaign to subdue the recalcitrant Saxons. It was a campaign that would rage for at least another decade, and even then there remained pockets of fierce resistance.

### What sort of ruler was William?

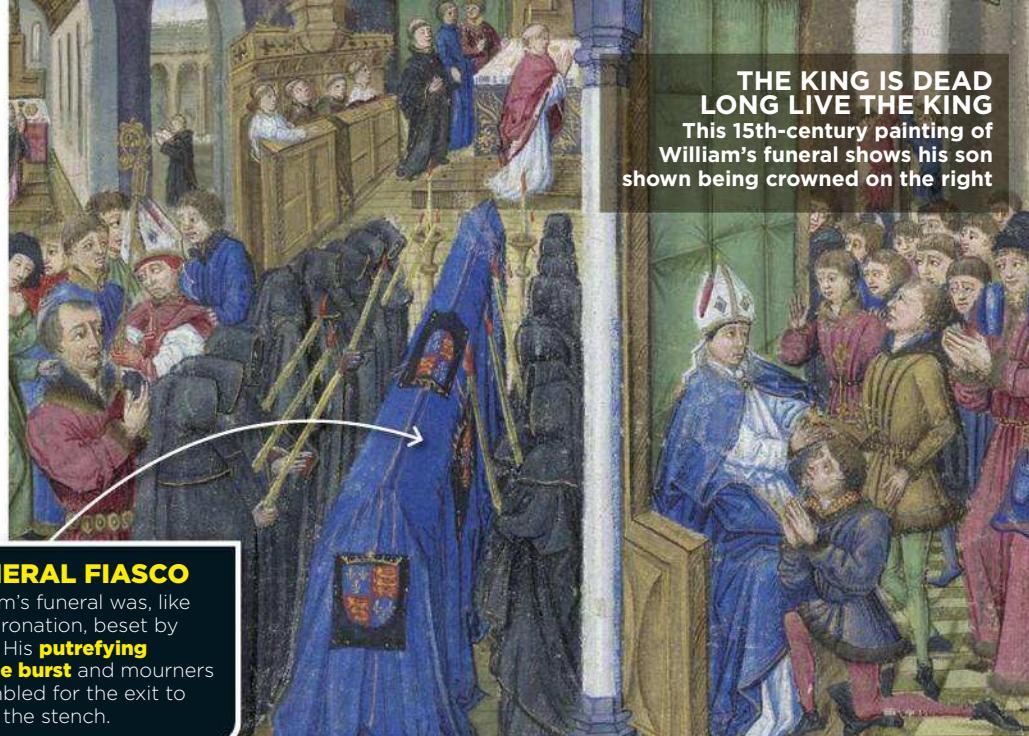
William epitomised everything Saxons despised about their conquerors. One of the most feared warriors in Europe, he could be merciless on campaign. His tactic was to bully his subjects into submission. Known as 'William the Bastard', his illegitimacy undermined his credibility and gave strength to rivals with arguably better claims.

### What role did his wife Matilda play?

William's formidable wife Matilda played a key, largely unsung, role. She arrived in 1068, having stayed in Normandy for two years as de facto regent. Her English subjects were suspicious because of the power she wielded in Normandy (this was not an age of equality) and called her "that strange woman". But her pedigree was unquestioned – she could trace her descent to King Arthur, as well as most royal families in Europe – and she lent much needed legitimacy, not to mention glamour, to the Norman dynasty. By the time of her death, she was hailed as "Queen Matilda, wealthy and powerful".

### What is your favourite Norman site?

The Tower of London, a bastion of Norman power that dominated the land and has withstood invaders for almost 1,000 years. I've just written a book about the Tower (*The Story of the Tower of London*, due out this year) and it was like writing a history of England – it was at the centre of so many momentous events in the country's history.

**THE KING IS DEAD****LONG LIVE THE KING**

This 15th-century painting of William's funeral shows his son shown being crowned on the right

**FUNERAL FIASCO**

William's funeral was, like his coronation, beset by farce. His **putrefying corpse burst** and mourners scrambled for the exit to avoid the stench.

## WILLIAM WAS TO SPEND LITTLE TIME IN THE KINGDOM HE'D FOUGHT SO HARD TO CONQUER

conquer. The Duchy of Normandy was under threat from its neighbours and from rebellion by William's son Robert Curthose. In 1085, towards the end of his reign, England was once again threatened with invasion from Denmark, causing William to commission the survey later known as Domesday Book to establish resources at his disposal.

After taking an oath of loyalty from his chief landowners at Salisbury on 1 August 1086, William crossed the Channel to deal with an

invasion of southern Normandy by King Philip I of France. In July 1087, he was supervising the devastation of the town of Mantes when his horse stumbled and he was thrown forward onto the pommel of his saddle causing painful, and fatal, internal injuries. On 9 September, the Conqueror died. His putrefying body was taken to Caen for burial but when the priests tried to stuff it into a stone coffin that was too small for it, his body burst, causing mourners to rush for the doors in a bid to escape the stench. ☀

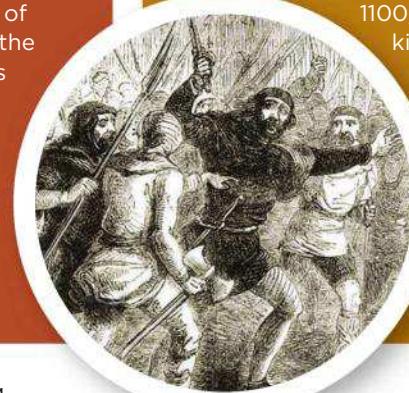
## A DIVIDED EMPIRE

Soon, England would be ruled by the Plantagenets

William the Conqueror divided his inheritance between his two surviving eldest sons. The eldest, Robert, was given Normandy while England went to William Rufus. William's third son, Henry, received no land but was given a hefty sum of money instead. In 1100, William Rufus was killed in a hunting accident in the New Forest. At the time, Robert

**CIVIL WAR**  
For 20 years, William's grandchildren Matilda and Stephen vied for the throne

was returning from the First Crusade and his younger brother Henry took advantage of his absence to seize the crown of England. In 1106, Henry captured Robert at the Battle of Tinchebray and gained control of Normandy. When Henry died in 1135 he left many illegitimate children but no legitimate male heir. He nominated his daughter Matilda (who was married to Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou) to succeed him but many of the nobility were unwilling to accept her and instead supported Stephen of Blois, the son of William I's daughter Adela. The result was nearly two decades of civil war, which only ended when it was agreed that Stephen should be succeeded by Matilda's son, the future Henry II, who became king in 1154.



# GET HOOKED!

There is a wealth of resources available to further your conquest of all things Norman...

## PLACES TO VISIT



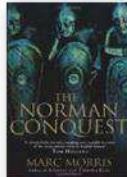
### ▲ BATTLE ABBEY

Built on the Hastings battle site by William's order. Along with parts of the battlefield, you can explore the abbey remains. A visitor centre tells the story of 1066. [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

### ALSO LOOK OUT FOR

- Durham's Norman cathedral [www.durhamcathedral.co.uk](http://www.durhamcathedral.co.uk)
- The ancient stone keep at Chepstow [cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://cadw.wales.gov.uk)
- The massive earthworks of Old Sarum [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

## BOOKS



### THE NORMAN CONQUEST (2012)

By Marc Morris

This is a well-written and balanced overview of William's conquest as a whole.



### MATILDA: QUEEN OF THE CONQUEROR (2012)

By Tracy Borman

The story of William's wife, Matilda, who was an important but often overlooked figure.

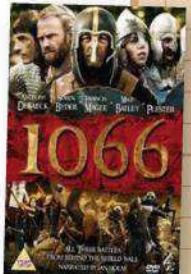
### ALSO LOOK OUT FOR

- Campaigns of the Norman Conquest by Matthew Bennett
- The Godwins: the Rise and Fall of a Noble Dynasty by Frank Barlow
- The Conquest historical fiction series by James Aitcheson

## ON SCREEN

### 1066: THE BATTLE FOR MIDDLE EARTH

This gritty two-part 2009 'docudrama' from Channel 4 tells the story of the conquest from the point of view of a band of humble soldiers.



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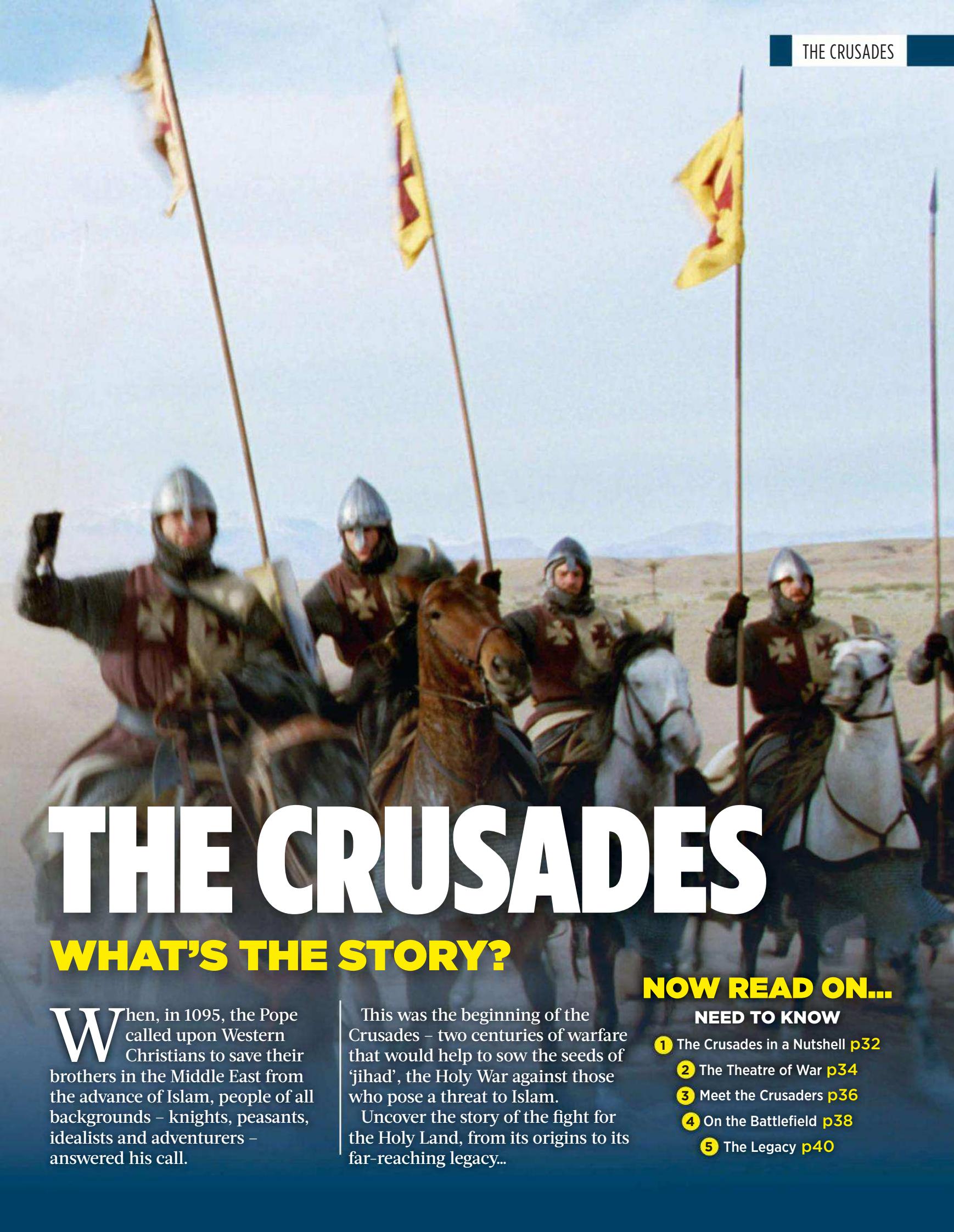
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## FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

How realistic are films  
like 2005's *Kingdom  
of Heaven* (2005)?

ALAMY XI



# THE CRUSADES

## WHAT'S THE STORY?

When, in 1095, the Pope called upon Western Christians to save their brothers in the Middle East from the advance of Islam, people of all backgrounds – knights, peasants, idealists and adventurers – answered his call.

This was the beginning of the Crusades – two centuries of warfare that would help to sow the seeds of 'jihad', the Holy War against those who pose a threat to Islam.

Uncover the story of the fight for the Holy Land, from its origins to its far-reaching legacy...

## NOW READ ON...

### NEED TO KNOW

- 1 The Crusades in a Nutshell p32
- 2 The Theatre of War p34
- 3 Meet the Crusaders p36
- 4 On the Battlefield p38
- 5 The Legacy p40

# THE CRUSADES IN A NUTSHELL

What sent Christian armies to the East?

**T**he era of what we think of as the Crusades began in November 1095, when Pope Urban II proposed a military expedition to seize Jerusalem from the Muslims. About 60,000 men, mainly from France, Flanders and Germany, marched into Asia Minor. In 1097, they defeated the Turks at Dorylaeum and, two years later, captured Jerusalem. The victorious Crusaders founded four new states in the eastern Mediterranean: Edessa, Antioch, Tripoli and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (see map on page 35).

It soon became apparent that these remote new kingdoms had a chronic shortage of men. Many of those who had taken part in the Crusade had gone home, leaving behind barely enough troops to defend, let alone extend, their newly conquered lands. The Kingdom of Jerusalem never pushed its frontiers to the natural barriers of the deserts to the east and south. It remained nothing more than a small coastal strip, all but surrounded by enemies.

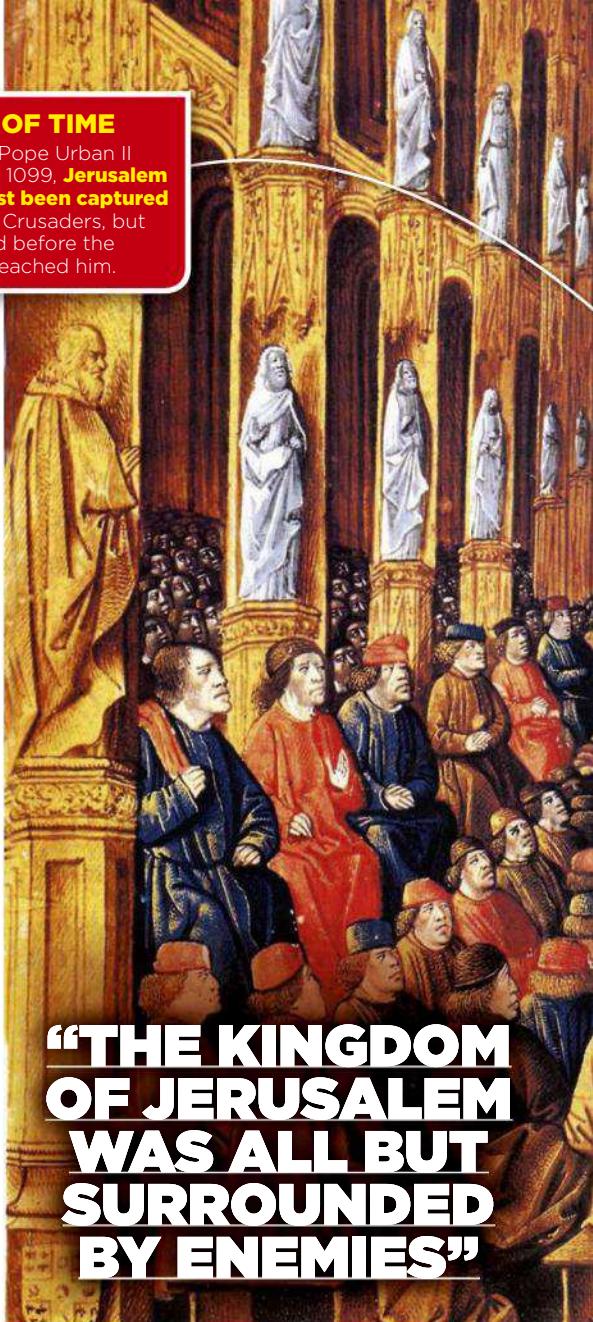
**600**

The weight in pounds of stone balls shot at Saone castle by Saladin in 1188

However, for more than 50 years, those Muslim enemies were far from united. As rivals themselves, they did not co-ordinate their opposition to the Christians, although they did recapture Edessa in 1144 and see off the Second Crusade in the late 1140s. All that changed in the 1170s when, through a mixture of warfare and diplomacy, Sultans Nur al-Din and Saladin succeeded in uniting the Muslim Middle East. Hopes of further Christian conquests were now a dim and distant memory and Jerusalem fell to Saladin in 1187.

Helped by sporadic Crusades (which were often launched in response to some military setback) the Western Christians hung on for another century. When possible, they took advantage of divisions among the Muslims but, when the Mamelukes (a dynasty of former slave soldiers) seized power in Egypt, the writing was on the wall. After defeating the Mongols, the Mamelukes turned their attention to the Western Christians. In 1291, Acre, the last great Crusader bastion fell to the Mamelukes. Western Christianity's time in the Holy Land was over.

**OUT OF TIME**  
When Pope Urban II died in 1099, Jerusalem had just been captured by the Crusaders, but he died before the news reached him.



**“THE KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM WAS ALL BUT SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES”**

## AT A GLANCE THE NINE QUESTS

Each of the nine Crusades had its own specific mission and was led by different men, who met with varying levels of success...



### FIRST CRUSADE

**WHEN:** 1095-99  
**AIM:** Support Byzantine Empire against Turks and take Jerusalem from Muslim hands  
**WHO:** Franks led by knight Godfrey de Bouillon and others  
**WHERE:** Anatolia and the Holy Land  
**OUTCOME:** Capture of Jerusalem and establishment of Crusader states



### SECOND CRUSADE

**WHEN:** 1147-49  
**AIM:** Support struggling Crusader kingdoms against Turks, and capture Damascus  
**WHO:** Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany  
**WHERE:** Anatolia and Syria  
**OUTCOME:** Failure



### THIRD CRUSADE

**WHEN:** 1189-92  
**AIM:** Support Latin Kingdom after its defeat by Saladin and recapture Jerusalem  
**WHO:** Philip II of France and Richard I (the Lionheart) of England  
**WHERE:** Holy Land  
**RESULT:** Saladin's conquests halted and Acre recaptured, but Jerusalem remains in Muslim control



### FOURTH CRUSADE

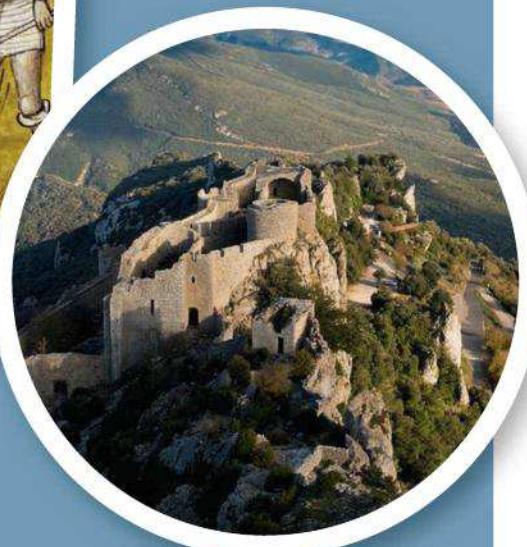
**WHEN:** 1202-04  
**AIM:** Recapture Jerusalem  
**WHO:** France, Holy Roman Empire, Venice  
**WHERE:** Byzantine Empire  
**RESULT:** Financial difficulties result in diversion to Constantinople, which is sacked by the Crusaders



**HOLY MISSION**  
Pope Urban II calls upon the Christian kingdoms to take up arms in 1095



**ON THE CONTINENT**  
LEFT: French heretics are burned in the 13th-century Albigensian Crusade  
BELOW: The former Cathar stronghold of the Château de Peyrepertuse in the Pyrenees



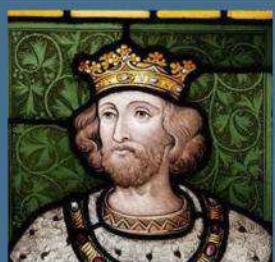
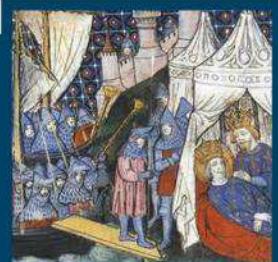
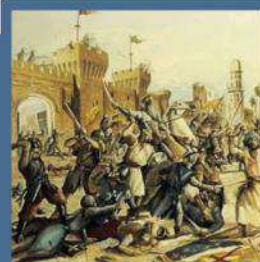
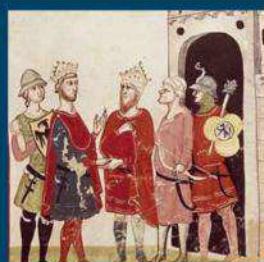
## WESTERN BATTLES CRUSADING IN EUROPE

It is popularly thought that the Crusades were Christian attempts to capture or defend Jerusalem – Jesus Christ's place of death. But in fact, crusading was never simply confined to the Holy Land. As early as 1114, a crusade was launched to recapture the Mediterranean Balearic Islands from Muslim hands while Crusaders from England, Germany and Flanders helped the King of Portugal retake Lisbon from the Moors in 1147.

In 1209, Pope Innocent III instigated what became known as the Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars – a heretical Christian sect that thrived in Languedoc, France. In a brutal, 20-year war, a largely French force defeated the Cathars and their protectors and conquered

the area. They then installed the Inquisition to root out further heresy.

The Church also preached successful crusades against the Pagans of eastern Europe and the Baltic. A number of military monastic orders bore the brunt of the fighting there, including the Livonian Brothers of the Sword and, particularly, the Teutonic Knights. This order of warriors switched its main activities from the Holy Land and carved out a state of its own in what would later become Prussia. Crusading in the Baltic proved particularly popular with the aristocracy of Europe – Henry Bolingbroke, the future King Henry IV of England, twice fought for the cause in the 1390s.



### FIFTH CRUSADE

**WHEN:** 1213-21  
**AIM:** Conquer Egypt as prelude to recapture of Jerusalem  
**WHO:** Holy Roman Empire, France and others  
**WHERE:** Egypt  
**RESULT:** Crusaders capture Damietta but are then forced to surrender

### SIXTH CRUSADE

**WHEN:** 1228-29  
**AIM:** Recapture Jerusalem and other holy places  
**WHO:** Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II  
**WHERE:** Holy Land  
**RESULT:** Jerusalem regained largely through diplomacy, and remains in Christian hands until 1244

### SEVENTH CRUSADE

**WHEN:** 1248-54  
**AIM:** As on Fifth Crusade: to conquer Egypt as prelude to recapture of Jerusalem  
**WHO:** Louis IX of France  
**WHERE:** Egypt  
**RESULT:** Complete defeat of Crusaders. Louis IX is captured and later ransomed.

### EIGHTH CRUSADE

**WHEN:** 1270  
**AIM:** Capture Tunis to provide base for attack on Egypt  
**WHO:** Louis IX of France  
**WHERE:** North Africa  
**RESULT:** Louis IX dies and the siege of Tunis is abandoned

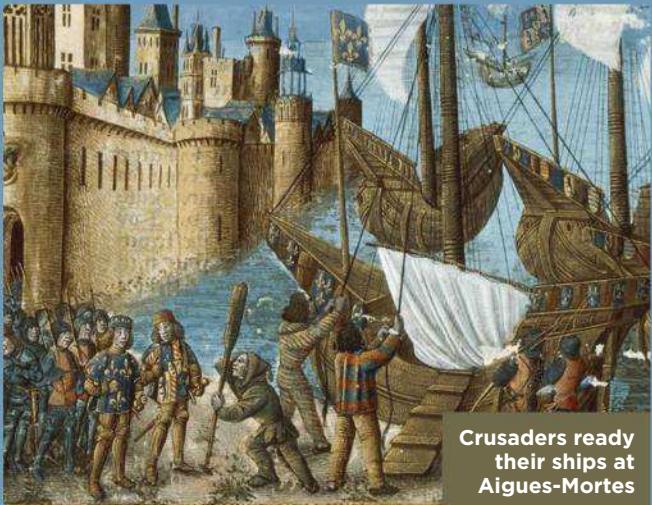
### NINTH CRUSADE

**WHEN:** 1271-72  
**AIM:** Support remains of Kingdom of Jerusalem and the besieged city of Acre  
**WHO:** Prince Edward of England, Charles I of Naples and others  
**WHERE:** Holy Land  
**RESULT:** Muslims lift siege of Acre, ten-year truce agreed with Mamelukes

# THE THEATRE OF WAR

Crusaders crossed thousands of miles to reach the sites of their holy battles

**T**he impact of the Crusades was felt right across the Mediterranean region, as Crusading armies marched through Europe or headed to the coast to reach the ships that would transport them to the Middle East and elsewhere.



Crusaders ready their ships at Aigues-Mortes

## AIGUES-MORTES

Founded by Louis IX, in 1240, this port provided access to the sea at a time when his brother and rival Charles (King of Naples and Aragon) occupied the coast to the east and south. Louis launched his two Crusades of 1248 and 1270 from Aigues-Mortes. The city walls (which still survive) were finished by his son Philip the Fair in 1302. When Philip suppressed the order of the Knights Templar in 1307, 45 of the warriors were imprisoned here.

## LISBON

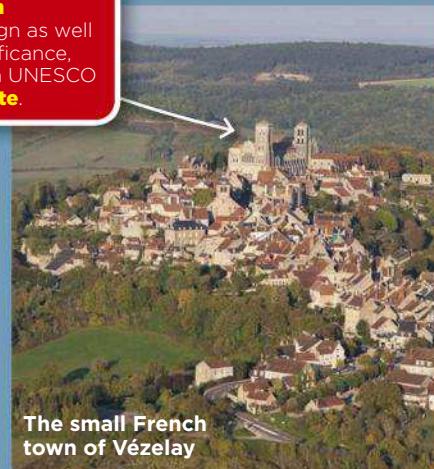
In 1147, bad weather forced a fleet of ships carrying a multi-national force of Crusaders bound for the Holy Land to stop on the Portuguese coast at Porto. King Alfonso I of Portugal met them and persuaded them to help him recapture the city of Lisbon, which was held by the Moors. A siege began on 1 July and, on 21 October, the starving defenders agreed to surrender. The city was then thoroughly sacked.



São Jorge Castle, Lisbon, Portugal

## WORK OF ART

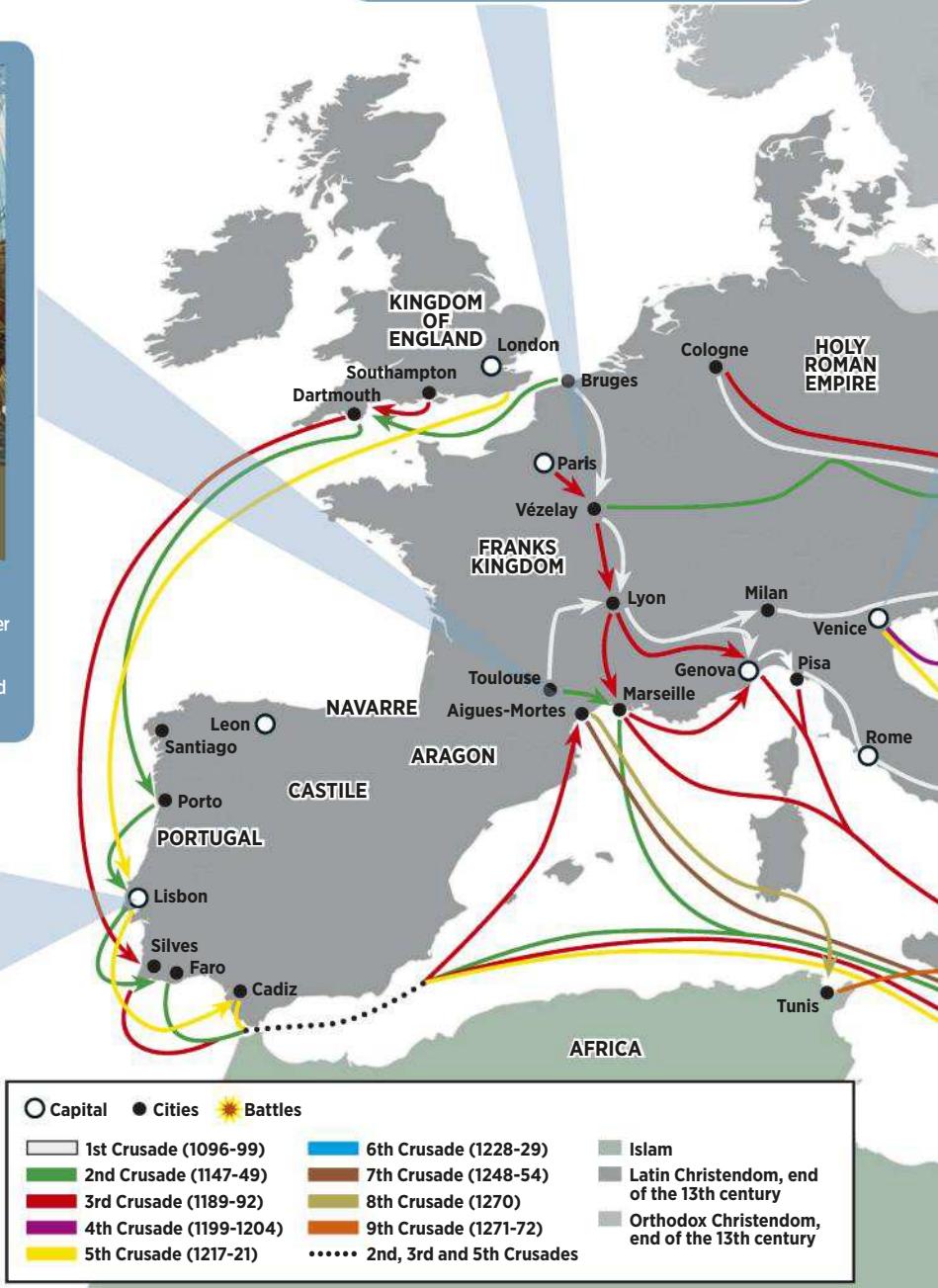
For its **Burgundian Romanesque** design as well as its historic significance, Vézelay Abbey is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

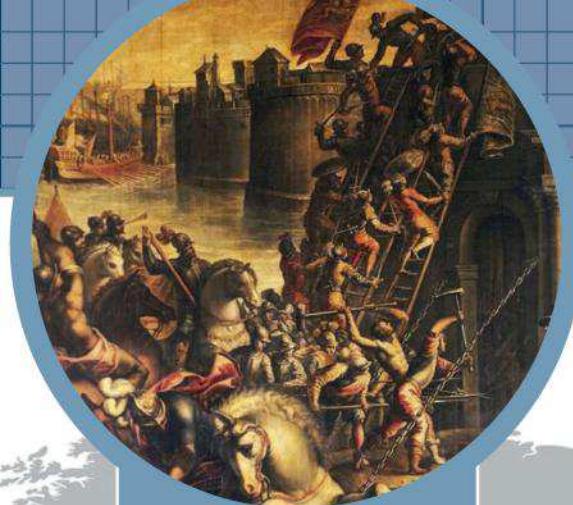


The small French town of Vézelay

## VÉZELAY

This important religious site has a hill-top Abbey that, so it was believed, held the relics of Mary Magdalene. The French Abbot St Bernard of Clairvaux preached the Second Crusade at Vézelay in 1146 and, in 1190, the English and French factions of the Third Crusade rendezvoused there before setting off for the Holy Land.





**The Venetians and the Crusaders take Zara**

**VENICE**

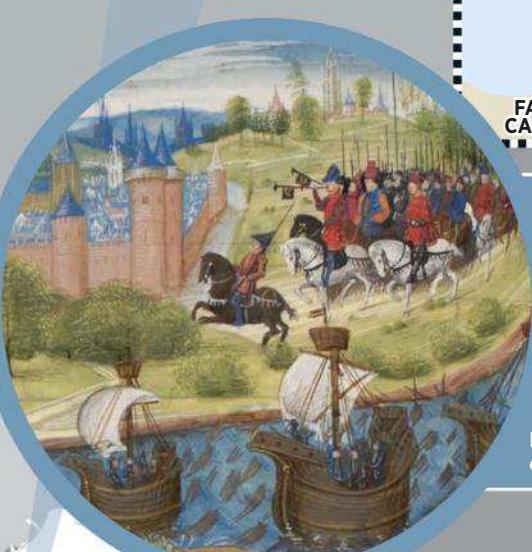
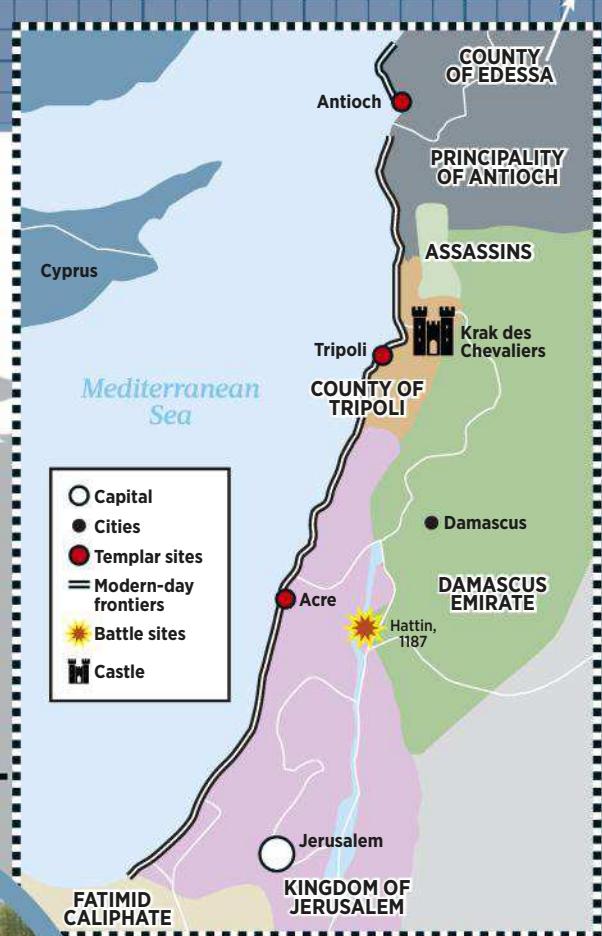
When the Fourth Crusade was launched in 1202, the Venetians were the only Western power with a fleet large enough to transport the Crusaders. In lieu of payment for the ships (which the Crusaders couldn't afford) the wily old Doge of Venice, Enrico Dandolo, asked for their support to recapture the port of Zara in Dalmatia, before going on to attack Constantinople.



**The 1204 capture of Constantinople**

**CONSTANTINOPLE**

The First Crusade was partly launched in response to an appeal by the Byzantine Emperor for help against the Turks, who had taken his capital. In 1204, under the pretext of restoring the Emperor Isaac Angelus to power in Byzantium, the Crusaders and the Venetians captured and sacked the city, later setting up a Latin Emperor. Although the Byzantine Empire survived for another 250 years, it never recovered from the blow. Constantinople finally fell to the Turks in 1453.



**CYPRUS**

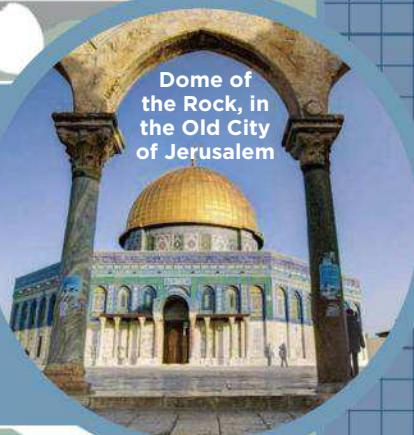
In April 1191, during the Third Crusade, Richard I of England sailed from Messina for Tyre but a storm dispersed his fleet. Berengaria of Navarre and Joan of England, the fiancée and sister of Richard respectively, who were travelling together, were shipwrecked on Cyprus and captured by its overlord, Isaac Komnenos. When he refused to release them, Richard conquered the island. In 1192, Guy de Lusignan, the deposed Christian King of Jerusalem was given the island and ruled it until his death in 1194, when he was succeeded by his brother Aimery.

**Richard I 'the Lionheart' conquers Cyprus in 1191**



**JERUSALEM**

A city of great religious significance to the religions of Christianity, Islam and Judaism alike. In 1099, it was captured by the First Crusade and many of its inhabitants massacred. The Christians held it until 1187, when it was recaptured by Saladin. The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II regained the city through diplomacy in 1229. This time, it remained in Christian hands until 1244, when the Egyptians destroyed their army at Harbiyah, north of Gaza. The expulsion of the Crusaders from the Holy Land was now simply a matter of time.



**DAMIETTA**

In 1249, Louis IX of France captured the town of Damietta but, soon after, his army was crushed by the Egyptians as it marched on Cairo. The survivors fell back to Damietta, but were defeated and Louis was taken prisoner. His release was eventually negotiated, in return for a ransom of 400,000 livres (at a time when France's entire annual revenue was only about 250,000 livres).



**Louis IX is captured, 1249**

## **KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOUR**

Orlando Bloom stars as a Crusader in the 2005 film *Kingdom of Heaven*



3

# MEET THE CRUSADERS

*Who were the men who crossed continents  
to fight for the Church?*

**R**eligious conflict in Europe was nothing new – it had been going on in Spain since the Moors had conquered the country in the eighth century AD. But, in 1095, Pope Urban II was asking people to invade a totally alien land over 2,500 miles away and all who went would have to fund themselves.

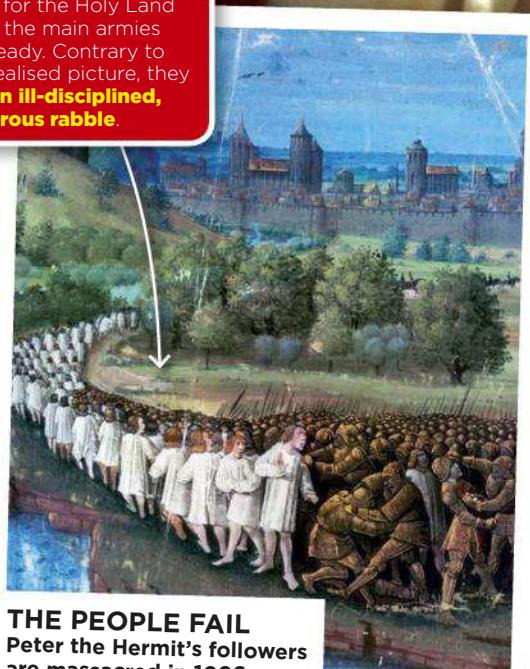
In exchange, the Pope offered a release from the burden of sin and, if anyone should die on Crusade, immediate entry into the kingdom of heaven. Pope Urban II's appeal struck a chord with many knights in Europe and, soon enough, people of all social ranks joined the

professional warriors on the First Crusade. The later Crusades tended to be organised and led by individual monarchs.

Thousands took the cross for purely religious reasons but others undoubtedly saw, alongside the prospect of salvation, a real chance of financial gain. Stephen of Blois,

## WIPING THE GUN

The 'People's Crusade' set off for the Holy Land before the main armies were ready. Contrary to this idealised picture, they were an ill-disciplined, murderous rabble.



## THE PEOPLE FAIL

Peter the Hermit's followers are massacred in 1096

one of the senior men on the First Crusade, wrote home to his wife that he'd been given so many valuable gifts by the Byzantine Emperor, that he now had twice as much gold and silver and other riches as when he left. The prospect of aquiring land seems only to have attracted a small number of Crusaders, for the vast majority returned home as soon as the expedition ended.

# **“ALONGSIDE THE PROSPECT OF SALVATION, THE CRUSADES OFFERED A REAL CHANCE OF FINANCIAL GAIN”**

## ROLL CALL KEY PLAYERS



**GODFREY DE BOUILLON**  
(1060-1100)  
The Duke of Lower Lorraine and one of the leaders of the First Crusade. After the capture of Jerusalem, he was proclaimed King of the new kingdom but refused the crown, accepting only the title of Defender of the Holy Faith.



**NŪR AL-DĪN**  
(1118-74)  
The ruler of Syria, who devoted himself to jihad against the Christians of the Crusader States. He overran Antioch in 1151 and later established control of Muslim Egypt, paving the way for the victories of Saladin, his successor.



**SALADIN**  
(1137-93)  
The Sultan of Egypt and Syria who defeated the Christians at the Battle of Hattin in 1187 and recaptured Jerusalem. His conquests were brought to an end by the Third Crusade.



**FREDERICK II**  
(1194-1250)  
The Holy Roman Emperor and King of Sicily. He spent much of his reign in conflict with the Papacy and was excommunicated four times. He led the Fifth Crusade, managed to obtain Jerusalem by diplomacy and crowned himself King there.



**LOUIS IX**  
(1214-70)  
The French King who was canonised in 1297. He led the Seventh Crusade but was defeated, captured and later ransomed. He tried again in 1270 but died at Tunis. He had Paris's famous Sainte-Chapelle built to house his collection of holy relics.

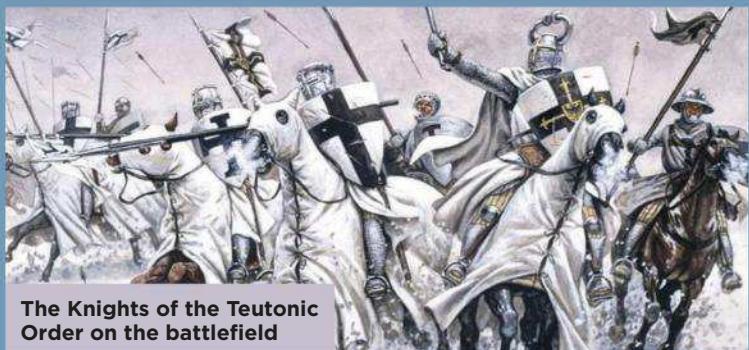


**BAIBARS**  
(1223-77)  
The Egyptian Sultan who defeated both the Christians and Mongols in battle. An expert in siege warfare, he captured numerous Christian strongholds, making their final defeat just a matter of time.

## HOLY WARRIORS

### THE KNIGHTS OF CHRIST

From the 1120s, a number of military orders established themselves in the Crusader states. The most formidable were the Templars and the Hospitallers. The Templars were originally founded to protect pilgrims travelling in the Holy Land, while the Hospitallers established hospitals to care for them. As time went on, they developed into warrior monks, combining vows of poverty, chastity and obedience with strict military discipline. They grew in importance until they were the fighting elite of the Christian armies in the East. Many castles were also entrusted to them.



The Knights of the Teutonic Order on the battlefield

#### ▲ TEUTONIC KNIGHTS

Established in the late-12th century, the Teutonic Knights were rather overshadowed by the two other major military orders. They initially concentrated their activities in Antioch and Tripoli, but were nearly wiped out in 1210. Thereafter, they were most influential crusading in Prussia, where they carved out a kingdom for themselves. Teutonic knights wore white with black crosses.



The Knights Hospitallers prepare for battle

#### ▲ HOSPITALLERS

The order of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, or Hospitallers, began life providing care for Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land, but eventually developed a military role. In 1168, the order sent 500 knights to the invasion of Egypt. The knights originally wore black mantles but later changed to their better-known red.

#### ► TEMPLARS

The Knights of the Temple was the first of the military orders, originally founded in 1119 by just eight or nine knights, who swore to observe monastic vows and protect pilgrims. In 1129, it was recognised by the Pope as a branch of the Cistercian Order and soon grew in size and importance. Its Knights wore white cloaks with red crosses, sergeants wore brown.



A Templar Knight re-enactor brandishes his sword and shield

# ON THE BATTLEFIELD

*The Crusades may have been holy, but they were won (and lost) much like any medieval battle*

Like many medieval wars, the Crusading armies mainly consisted of armoured knights, who stormed into battle with lances and swords, supported by shield-carrying infantry, who were equipped with a variety of weapons including spears and crossbows.

As the battle began, the infantry would deploy first, in front of the mounted knights.

**170,000**

The amount of rock, in tons, used by the Crusaders to build their castle at Saone

There, they would protect the knights' steeds – which usually lacked armour – from arrow fire, before moving aside to allow the armoured men to deliver what was hoped would be a devastating massed charge.

The Muslim armies were also well equipped. They had their fair share of well-armoured horsemen and foot soldiers, as well as mounted archers, whose job it was to skirmish and harass the enemy.



## THIRST FOR VICTORY

Re-enactors recreate the 1187 Battle of Hattin, at which the Christians' need for water had dire consequences

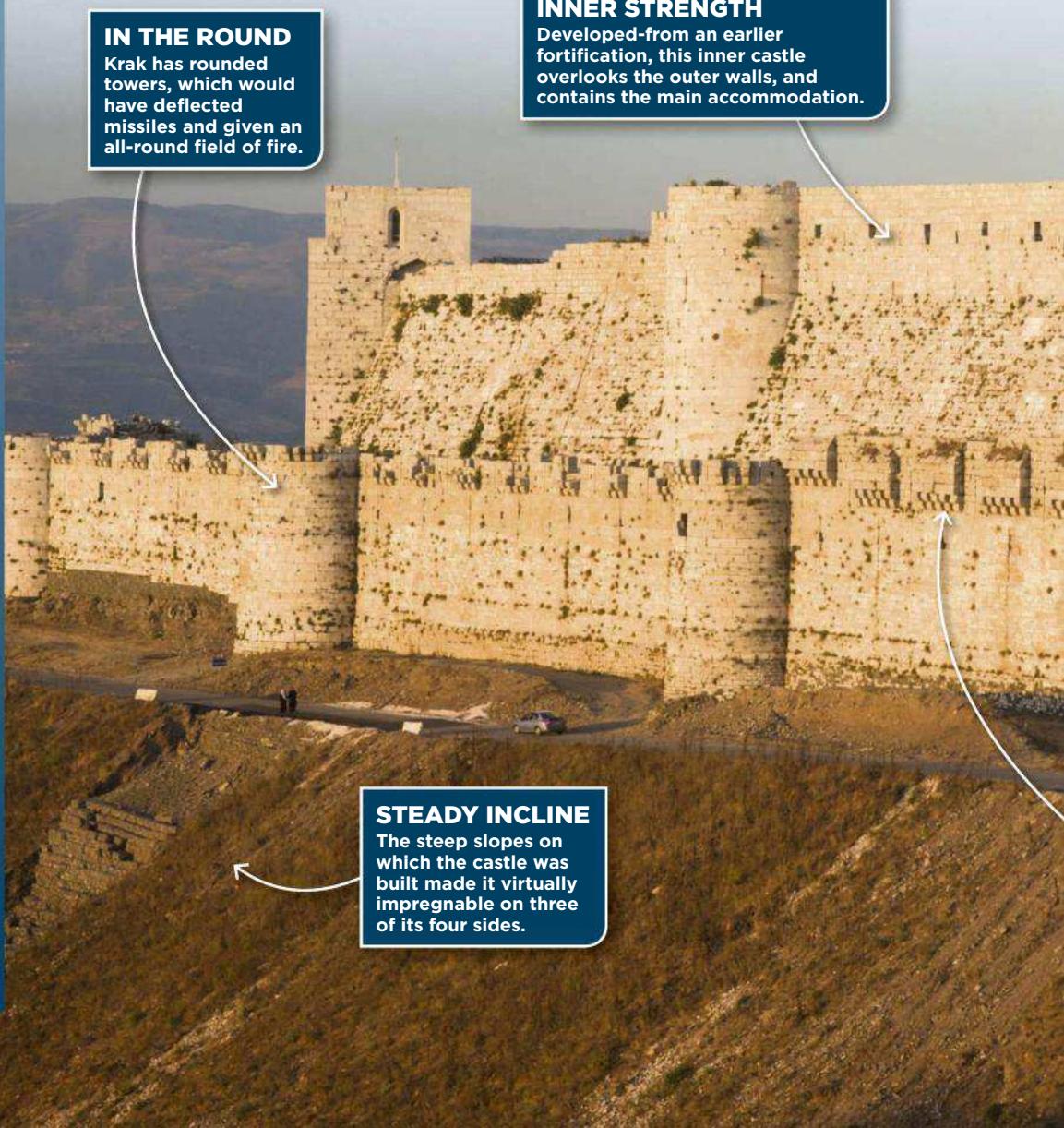
**“ARMOURED KNIGHTS STORMED INTO BATTLE WITH LANCES AND SWORDS”**

## THE ULTIMATE FORTRESS: KRAK DES CHEVALIERS

This Christian-held fortress was one of the most important strongpoints in the Holy Land. It had belonged to the Count of Tripoli but it was so expensive to maintain that, in 1141, he handed it over to the Hospitallers (see page 37), who strengthened it considerably. Occupying a key strategic position on the border of Syria, Krak became a crucial rallying point for expeditions against the Muslims and a refuge when the Christians were attacked. In 1167, Nūr al-Dīn's besieging army was surprised and defeated beneath its walls. Two decades later, Saladin arrived, inspected its defences and left without attempting a siege.

But by the mid-13th century, Krak was running out of men. Whereas early in the century it had a garrison of 2,000, by 1268 the two key castles of Krak and Margat had just 300 knights between them.

In March 1271, Sultan Baibars invaded the castle. His engineers undermined the south-west tower of the outer wall, making it collapse. The Muslims stormed into the outer ward but they were still faced with the formidable inner castle. Despairing at ever taking this by force, they resorted to trickery. A forged letter was sent into the castle purporting to come from the Hospitallers' Grand Commander and instructing the defenders to surrender. The garrison obeyed and, on 8 April, the remaining knights left under the coast.





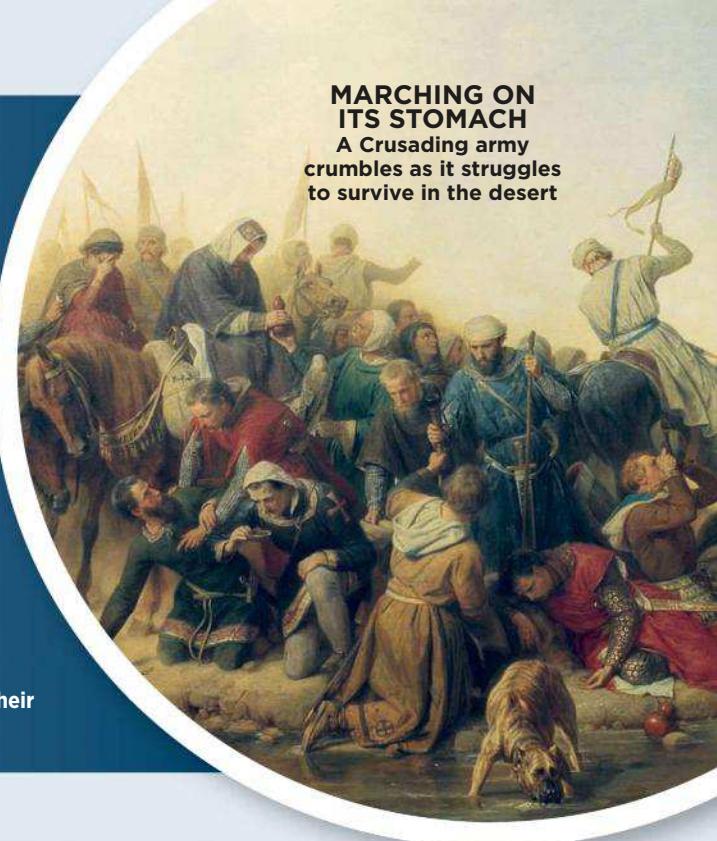
## SUPPLY AND DEMAND

# HOW WERE THE CRUSADES SUPPLIED?

One way in which the Crusades differed from other medieval wars, was in how the armies were supplied. Most European armies of the Middle Ages lived off the land. This might have worked in the fertile countries of northern Europe but the semi-arid lands of the Middle East were a different matter. During the First Crusade, thousands of invaders died of starvation. Things weren't much better during the Second Crusade but, by the time of the Third, the leaders began to see the importance of logistics. Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I insisted that every German Crusader had enough money to keep himself and his family abroad for a year. Diplomats were sent ahead of the main armies to arrange safe passage and buy food. Richard I even established a supply base for his forces on Cyprus.

Securing a good supply of water was even more important. During the 12th century, the Christians frequently thwarted Muslim incursions by taking up positions that were well supplied with water, and letting heat and thirst defeat the enemy. But when, in 1187, they marched away from their water supplies in a bid to relieve the besieged town of Tiberias, their thirsty army fell apart and was destroyed by Saladin at the Battle of Hattin (1187).

**MARCHING ON ITS STOMACH**  
A Crusading army crumbles as it struggles to survive in the desert



### WARDEN'S TOWER

The commander ran things from here. The banner of the Hospitallers once flew from its battlements.

### MOUNTAIN WALL

24-metre-thick 'mountain' of masonry to strengthen the walls of the inner castle.

### STRONG POINT

Large square tower built by the Arabs to strengthen the vulnerable south side of the castle.

### DANGER FROM ABOVE

The floor openings in these projecting stone galleries, or machicolations, allowed missiles to be dropped onto the attackers below.

### DOOMED TOWER

The south-west tower was rebuilt by the Muslims after they had undermined the original tower during the siege of 1271.

### CAPTURE THE CASTLE

The fading Sun casts its glow over the one-time home of Knights Hospitallers, Krak des Chevaliers, in modern-day Syria



# THE LEGACY

Prolonged contact with the Middle East made waves in the art and culture of Christendom

**U**nsurprisingly, the impact of almost 200 years of Crusading upon the Middle East was, on the whole, incredibly negative. Looking beyond the lives that were lost, the Crusades helped to shatter the relative tolerance that had existed within Islam, led to the end of Christian majorities

in many parts of the region and fatally weakened the Byzantium Empire.

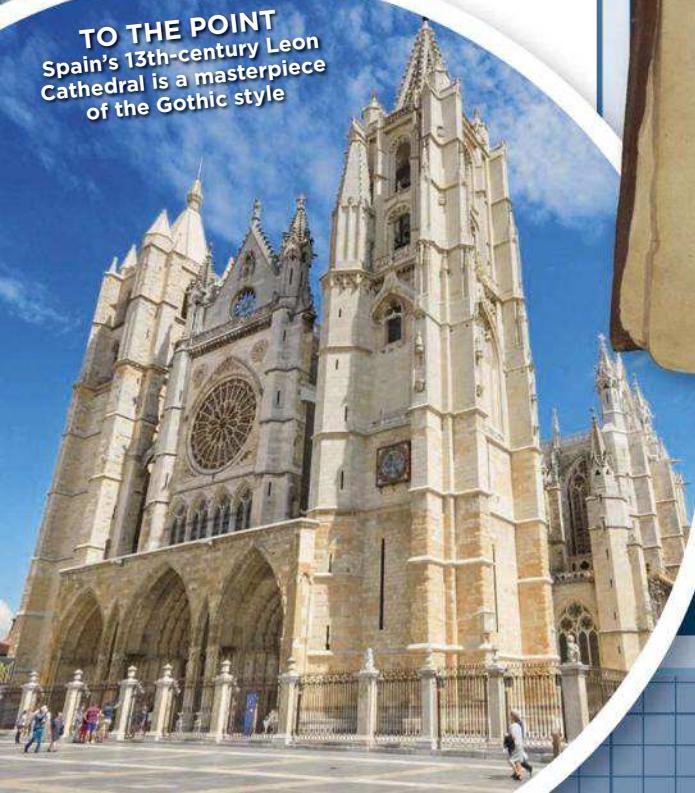
On the other hand, Christian Europe learned a great deal from its contact with Islam and the Middle East, even though much of this happened as a result of trade rather than the wars themselves...

**“CHRISTIAN EUROPE LEARNED A GREAT DEAL FROM ITS CONTACT WITH ISLAM”**

## THE POINTED ARCH

Some have argued that the replacement of the round Romanesque arch by the Gothic pointed arch in Western architecture was, in part, influenced by the experiences of Crusaders who saw the style in the Middle East. Many churches and cathedrals, particularly in areas that were once under Muslim control, like Spain, incorporate such Islamic decorative features.

**TO THE POINT**  
Spain's 13th-century Leon Cathedral is a masterpiece of the Gothic style

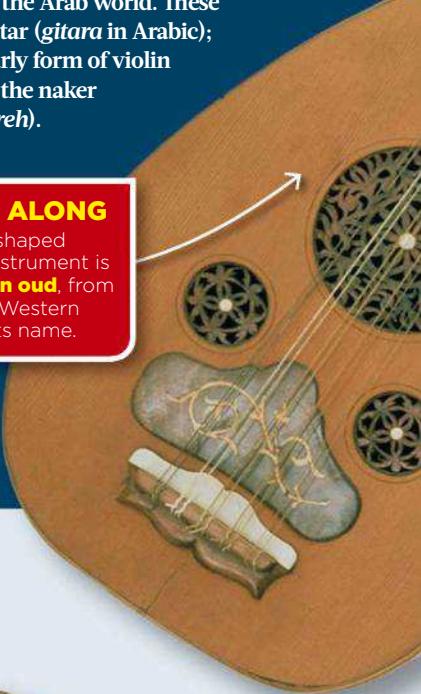


## MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

A number of modern musical instruments used in European music were influenced by those the Crusaders encountered in the Arab world. These include: the guitar (*gitara* in Arabic); the rebec, an early form of violin (or *rebab*); and the naker drum (or *naqareh*).

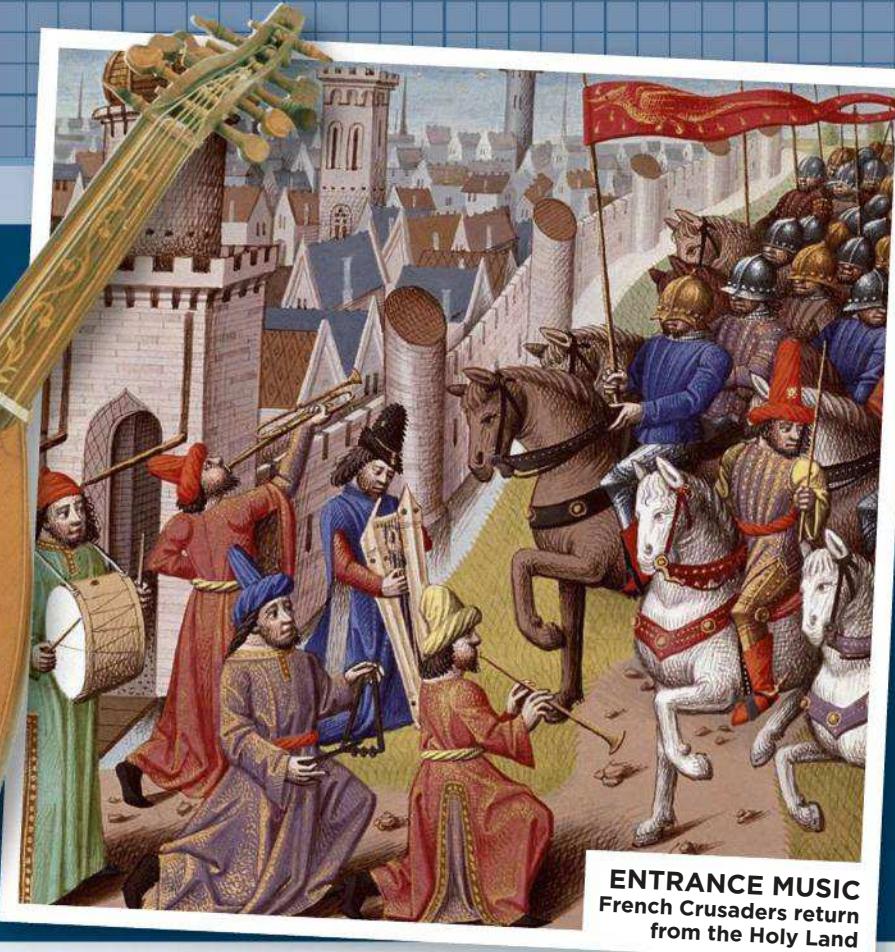
### STRING ALONG

This pear-shaped stringed instrument is a **Moroccan oud**, from which the Western lute took its name.

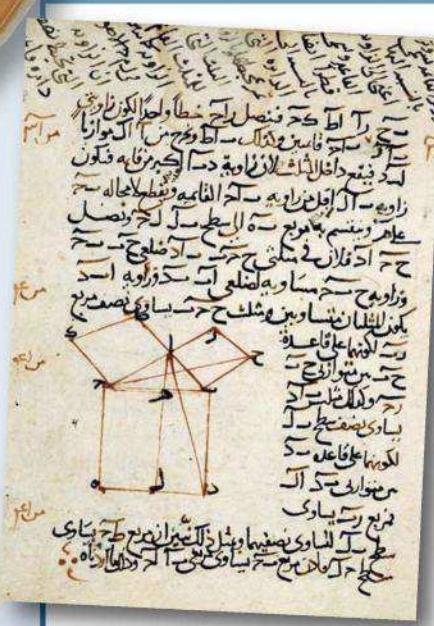


## MEDICINE

The works of the 11th-century Persian physician Ibn Sīnā, who was known in the West as Avicenna, were extraordinarily influential. His *Canon of Medicine* (above) and *Book of Healing* were standard medical textbooks in many Western universities and remained in use as late as the 17th century.

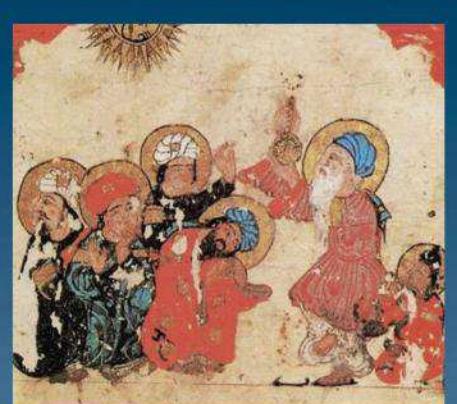
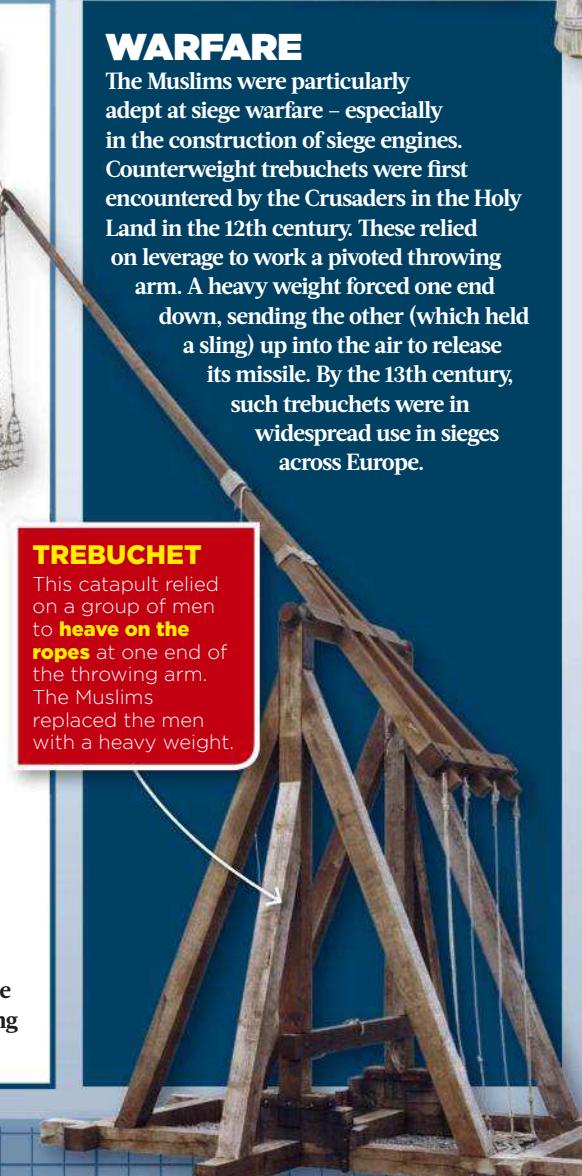


**ENTRANCE MUSIC**  
French Crusaders return from the Holy Land



## MATHEMATICS

The replacement of Roman numerals by the Indo-Arabic numbers we still use today made numerical calculations much easier. The work of 9th-century Persian mathematician Muhammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī was extremely influential throughout the Middle Ages. The word 'algorithm' is derived from his name, while 'algebra' comes from his use of the term *al-jabr*, meaning the bringing together of broken parts.



## ASTROLABES

Arabic astronomers (or astrologers) use an astrolabe. An early form of sextant used to determine the position of the moon, planets and stars, it was invented by the Greeks but refined in the Muslim world.



## GLOBAL GAMING

The 12th-century Lewis chessmen, probably made in Norway

## CHESS

'The game of Kings' is believed to have originated in India in the sixth century AD before spreading to Persia. It moved through the Muslim world following the Arab conquest of Persia and then on to the Western world. The term 'Checkmate' comes from *Shah mat* - Persian for 'the King is destroyed, defeated or helpless'.

## ETYMOLOGY CORNER

### ARABIC ORIGIN

#### ALCOHOL

Derived from *al-kuhl*, an Arabic word for 'a fine powder' – something refined.

#### BARBICAN

The British word for a fortified outpost or gateway probably comes from the Arabic *barbakh* meaning 'gatehouse'.

#### ADMIRAL

The term for the highest rank of naval officer comes from the Arabic *Amir-al*, meaning 'Commander of'.

## RICHARD THE LIONHEART

ARCANGEL IMAGES X2, ALAMY XI



# RICHARD I

# LIONHEART

MEDIEVAL CRUSADER KING

Shortly after becoming King of England, Richard I left these shores to join the Third Crusade to recapture Jerusalem. But the Lionheart encountered trouble at every turn



**T**he devil is loose." It was February 1194 and Prince John of England had just heard the news he'd

been dreading. For years he had taken advantage of his brother's absence on Crusade, and subsequent imprisonment in Germany, by extending his own power over England, but now he had to face the music. King Richard was coming home.

Richard had been away for more than four years, having answered a greater calling to take up the fight in the Holy Land. After Jerusalem had fallen to Saladin in 1187, a Third Crusade was preached by Pope Gregory VIII to recover the Holy City. Even before he became king, Richard had promised to join it. In December 1189, he crossed from Dover to Calais. At a meeting with Philip of France, it was confirmed they would share the spoils of war equally and that their joint crusade would depart from the great pilgrimage centre of Vézelay on 1 April the following year.

In the event, the two kings marched south from Vézelay on 4 July 1190, before going their separate ways when they reached Lyon. Richard headed for Marseille, where he had arranged to

meet the huge fleet he had assembled to transport his forces to join the Christian army besieging Acre in Palestine. But the fleet was delayed after its sailors ran amok in Lisbon. After waiting for a week at Marseille, Richard ran out of patience. He hired ships to take one contingent of his army to the Holy Land while he himself sailed along the Italian coast with ten transport ships and 20 galleys to his rendezvous with Philip in Sicily.

## RICHARD AND PHILIP AGREED TO SHARE THE SPOILS OF THE CRUSADE EQUALLY

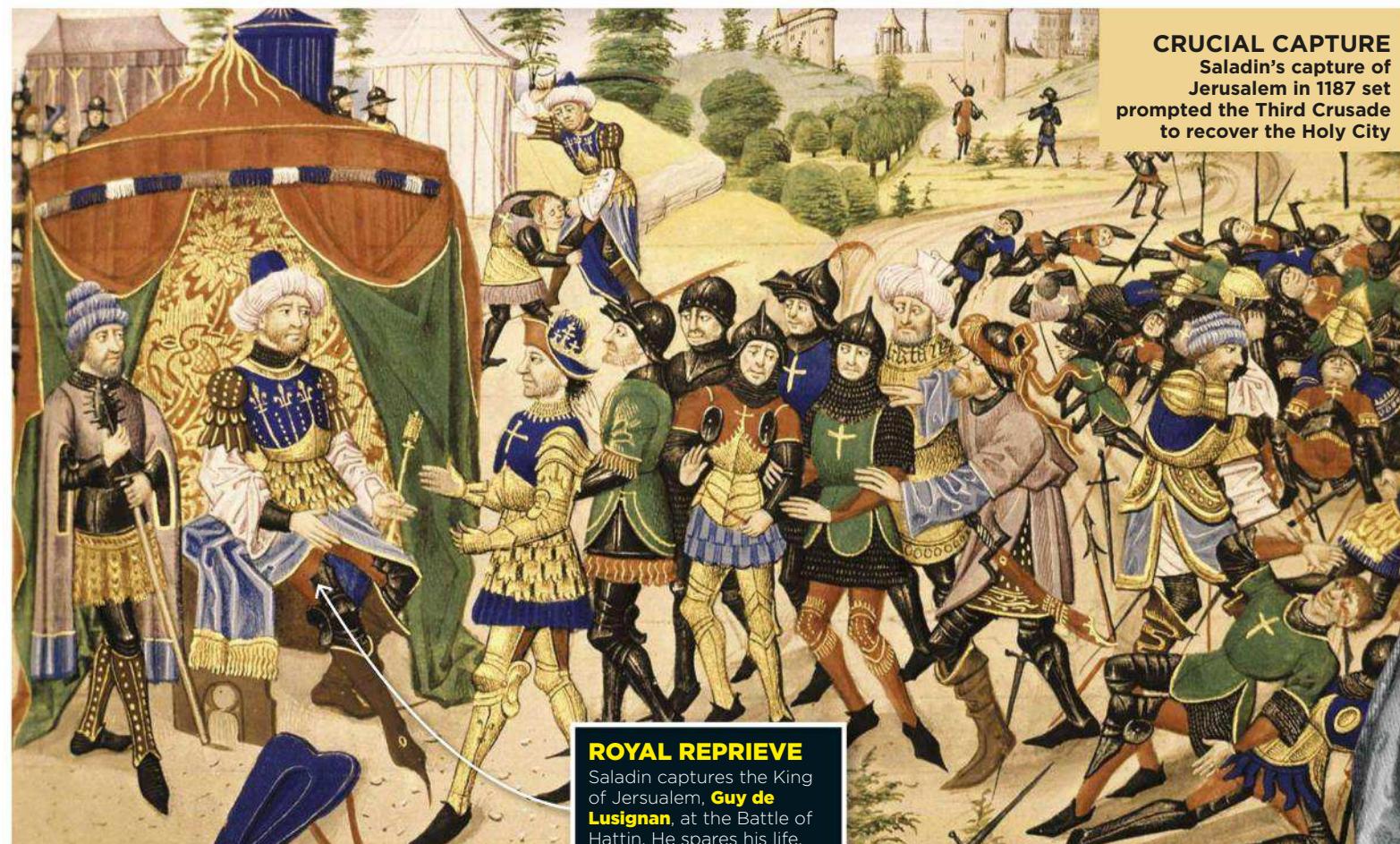
Richard had a personal interest in Sicily because its new king, Tancred, was holding the dowager queen Joanna captive; she was Richard's sister. Richard soon secured her release, but Tancred refused to hand over her dowry, as well as the treasure her late husband had left as a subsidy for the crusade. However, when Richard captured the city of Messina from him, Tancred handed over the money.

During all this, Philip had been rather sidelined and his mood wasn't helped when Richard informed him he was breaking off his engagement to the French king's sister Alix. The pair had been betrothed since childhood, but Richard was now intending to marry Princess Berengaria of Navarre instead.

### STORMY WEATHER

Richard's immense fleet eventually left Messina on 10 April 1191. Within days, it ran into a storm and the ship carrying Berengaria was forced to put into Cyprus, where it was detained by Isaac Komnenos, the island's self-proclaimed emperor, who had already seized the cargoes and arrested the survivors from two wrecked crusader ships.

On 6 May, Richard arrived on the scene. When Isaac refused to return the prisoners and the plunder, Richard acted decisively. He stormed ashore, captured Limassol and, after marrying Berengaria in the chapel of St George, proceeded to conquer the entire island with the help of Guy de Lusignan, the defeated king of Jerusalem who had recently arrived from Acre. It is said that Isaac Komnenos surrendered on just one condition – that he should not be put in irons – so Richard had him bound in



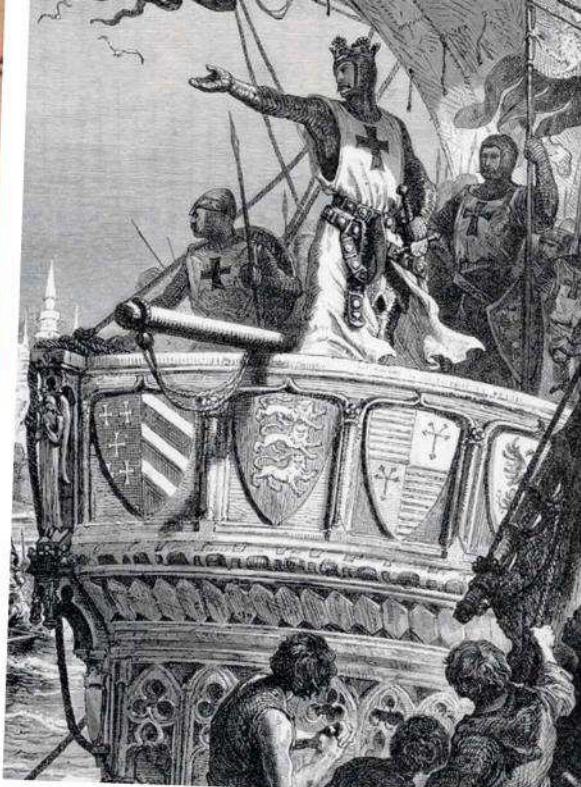
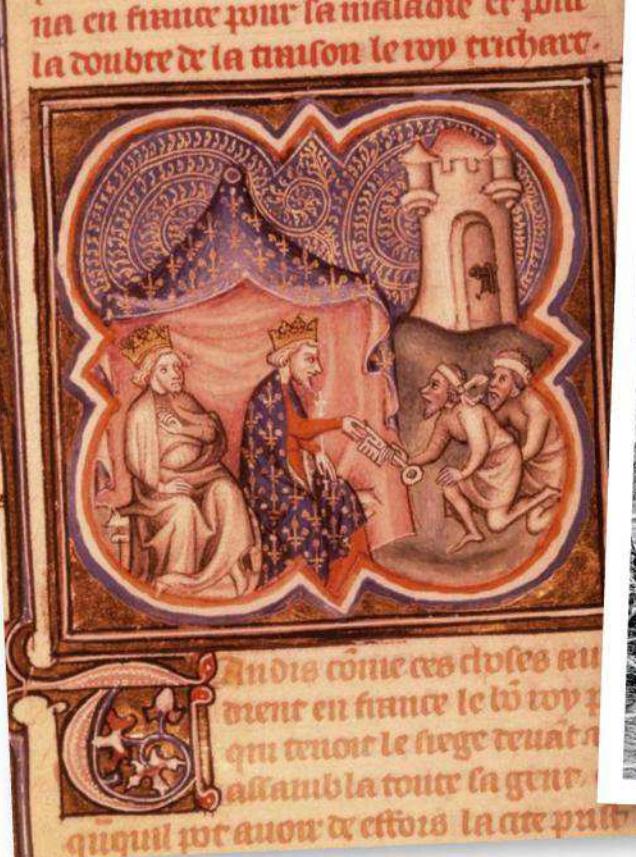
restraints made from silver instead. The capture of Cyprus turned out to be a huge bonus as it provided the crusaders with an invaluable supply base.

On 8 June, Richard's contingent arrived at Acre, which had been under siege for two years. The arrival of fresh troops and new siege equipment tipped the balance and, after a final attempt by Saladin was beaten back, the city surrendered to the Crusaders. Terms were agreed on 12 July: the garrison would be ransomed in return for 200,000 dinars, the release of 1,500 Christian prisoners, and the return of a piece of the True Cross from Christ's crucifixion. All this was to be done by 20 August, but the Crusaders soon fell out amongst themselves.

### THREE'S A CROWD

As the banners of the two kings were set up over Acre, a third banner was also raised. It was the standard of Duke Leopold of Austria, the leader of the small German contingent. The two kings had no intention of letting Leopold claim a share of the spoils, so Richard's soldiers tore it down. It was an action that would have dire consequences for Richard in the future.

The Crusaders also clashed over who should rule the Latin kingdom. While Richard initially supported the old king, Guy de Lusignan, both Philip and Leopold favoured his rival, Conrad of Montferrat. Conrad was later proclaimed king, but was assassinated before his coronation could take place. Rumours circulated that Richard may have had a hand in his murder. On 3 August, Philip – who was in ill health and unhappy



### CRUSHING CRUSADE

ABOVE: Acre's  
Muslims hand the  
key to the city  
over to Richard  
and Philip

ABOVE RIGHT:  
Richard sets sail  
from the Holy  
Land for Europe

about the way he had been outshone by Richard – set sail for France, putting those of his contingent who chose to remain in the Holy Land under the command of Hugues of Burgundy. Richard was probably not sorry to see him go, but he now had two enemies in Philip and Leopold – and both were back in Europe before him.

By 20 August, Richard was ready to march south towards Jerusalem. Saladin still hadn't paid the ransom for the Muslim prisoners taken at Acre and – suspecting that Saladin was trying to delay things, as well as believing that he couldn't leave 2,700 captives to be guarded and fed in Acre – Richard ordered their execution.

### SIBLING RIVALRY

## The ultimate dysfunctional family

King Henry II spent the last 15 years of his reign saddled with four sons who switched from being allies to rivals with bewildering regularity.

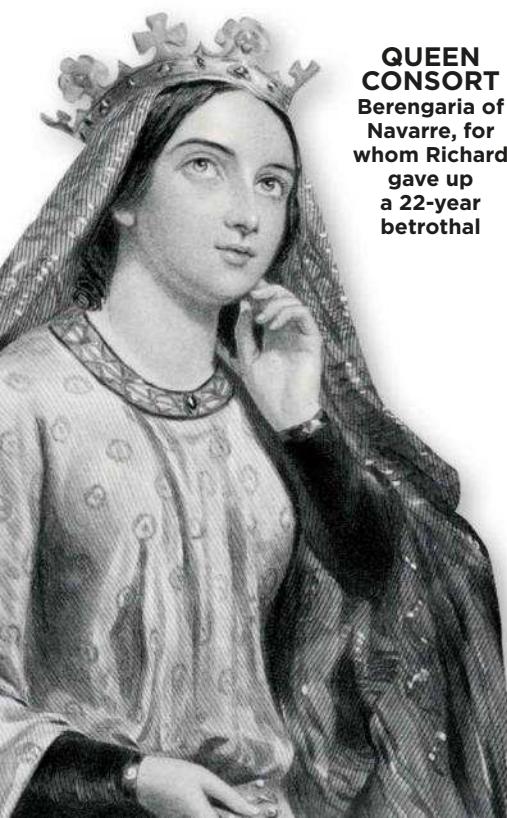
In 1170, the King tried to avoid a succession crisis by crowning Henry, his eldest surviving son, as future king. But the Young King, as Henry Jr became known, was unhappy about his father's refusal to allow him any real power. In 1173, joined by Richard (by now Duke of Aquitaine), his younger brother Geoffrey and even his mother Eleanor, he rebelled against his father. The rebellion was suppressed, but 1182 saw Henry again faced with family conflict when Richard only agreed to do homage to his eldest brother if his ownership of Aquitaine was confirmed. The Young King refused and stirred up trouble by fomenting revolt in Aquitaine. Full-scale war was only avoided when the Young King unexpectedly died.

Because Richard was now heir to the throne, Henry instructed him to hand over Aquitaine to his brother John. Richard

refused and soon found himself fighting both Geoffrey and John. In December 1184, Henry summoned all three brothers back to England where they were publicly reconciled. But conflict broke out almost immediately, this time between Richard and Geoffrey over a command in Normandy. Warfare was narrowly avoided, but relations between Richard and his father remained tense. Concerned that Henry planned to disinherit him in favour of John, Richard joined forces with Philip of France. In 1189, they attacked Henry, who died at Chinon on 6 July. Richard was now king.

### FATHER FIGURE

Henry II saw his sons not only fight each other but also unite against his own reign

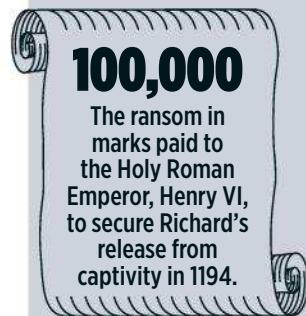


QUEEN CONSORT  
Berengaria of  
Navarre, for  
whom Richard  
gave up  
a 22-year  
betrothal

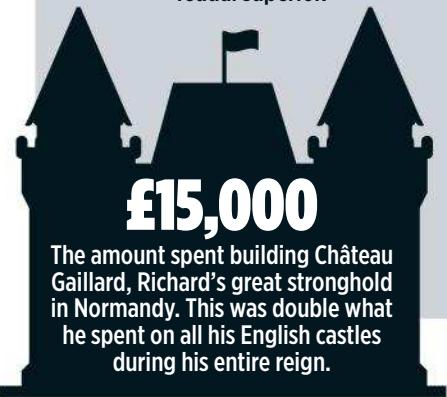


## THE LIFE OF RICHARD I

# NUMBERS GAME



## 10,000 MARKS



The number of children known to be fathered by Richard – an illegitimate son known as Philip of Cognac.

Only the commanders of the garrison were spared.

On 22 August, Richard's army left Acre and headed south. It was a tough journey in blistering heat and the Crusaders were harried all the way by Saladin's mounted archers. But Richard held his men together and, on 7 September, he defeated the Muslims at Arsuf. After taking Jaffa, Richard's army marched on Jerusalem. He got within around 12 miles of the Holy City in early January 1192 but, with his army short of supplies and ravaged by sickness, he was obliged to turn back. A later attempt on Jerusalem was also abandoned.

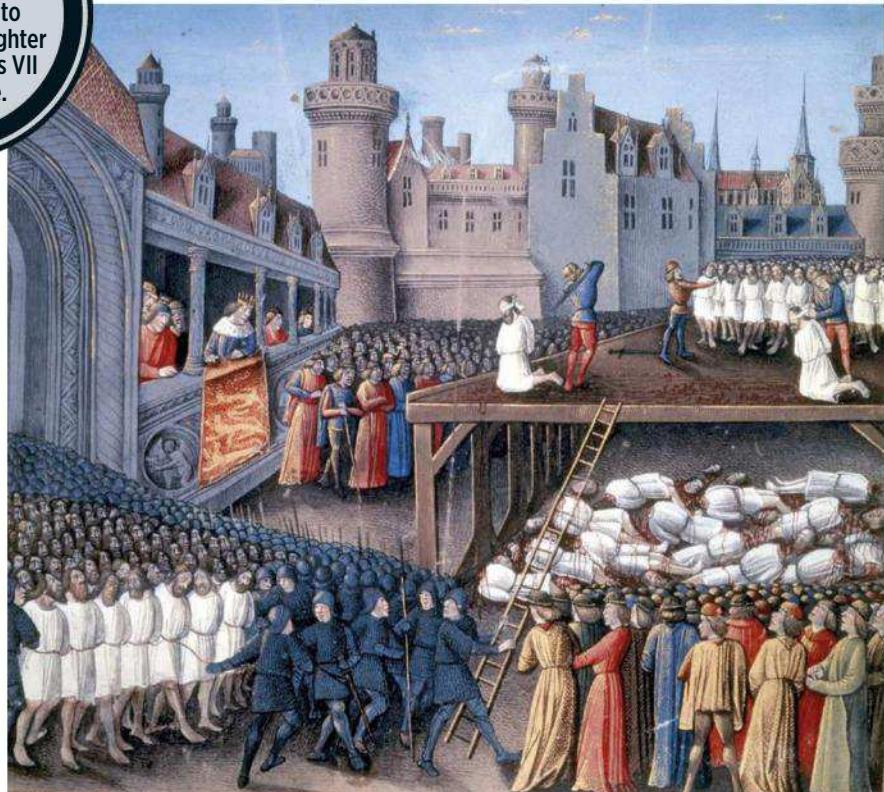
But, by now, Richard was receiving worrying news from home. In his absence, Philip of France was encroaching on his lands on the continent, while in England his brother John was plotting against him, garrisoning castles with his own supporters and undermining the authority of the men Richard had

appointed to run the country. Realising that he needed to get back to Europe as quickly as possible, Richard negotiated a three-year truce with Saladin who was also keen to end the fighting. The Third Crusade had failed to retake Jerusalem, but it hadn't been a total failure either. It had saved the Latin Kingdom from extinction, had captured some important strongholds and secured Christian pilgrims the right to enter Jerusalem. Richard was now free to return home, but how was he to get there?

## SWORN ENEMIES

Richard had fallen out with Philip of France, insulted Leopold of Austria and, by supporting Tancred of Sicily against him, alienated Henry, the Holy Roman Emperor. Returning via France wasn't an option and the Emperor controlled much of Germany, so returning by land would be a problem. On the other hand, it was now late in the year and weather conditions meant that the long

## THEY WERE PERHAPS JUST 50 MILES FROM SAFETY WHEN THEIR COVER WAS BLOWN



### PUBLIC EXECUTION

Before he and his troops headed towards Jerusalem, Richard ordered the deaths of 2,700 Muslim prisoners that they'd captured at Acre

## LIONHEART: THE MANE MAN

# A reluctant Englishman?

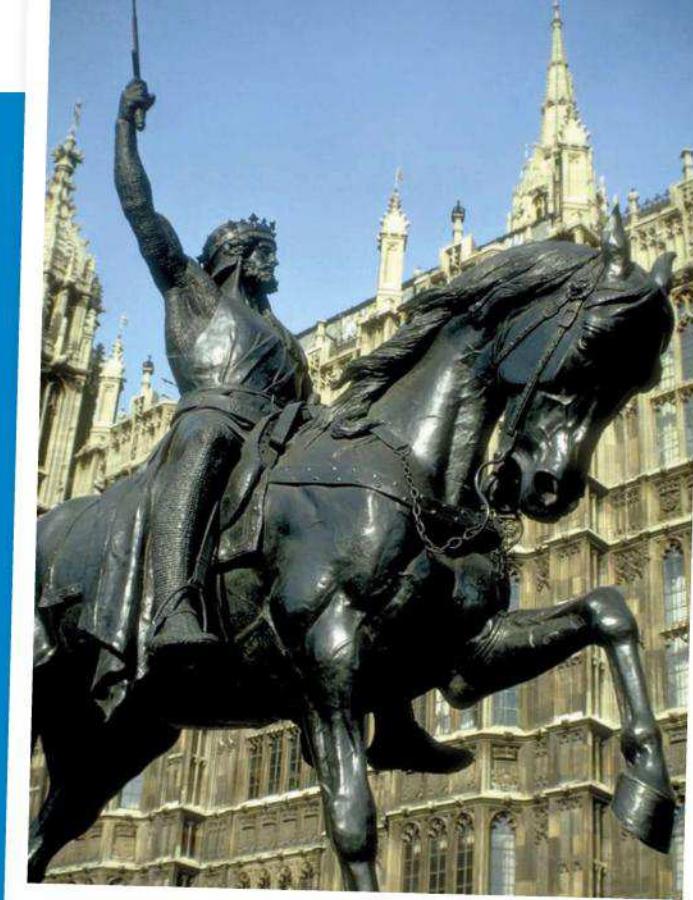
Richard has often been described as a man with no interest in England. Although born in Oxford, he spoke little English, spent just six months of his entire reign in the country and is reputed to have said that he would have sold London if he could have found a buyer. But to criticise him for his absence is to miss the point. Richard wasn't just King of England. As heir to the vast empire of his father, Henry II, he was also Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou, areas that needed defending against the incursions of his great rival, Philip of France. Following his release from captivity in 1194, Richard spent just two months in England before leaving its government in the capable hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury and sailing to Normandy. He never returned.

His move to France was just in time – in his absence, Philip had

already conquered large amounts of Richard's territory and been given others by his rebellious brother Prince John.

Over the next five years, Richard would pour his energies into the war against Philip, organising alliances and steadily winning back lands the French king had taken from him. When the two armies met at Fréteval on the Loire in July 1194, Philip fled so hurriedly that he left behind his entire baggage train, including his treasure and archives.

Four years later, Philip was on the run again, this time during Richard's campaign to recapture the Vexin, a county north of the Seine between Normandy and the Île de France. At the battle of Gisors, so many French knights were struggling to escape across a bridge that it collapsed. Philip was pulled to safety but 120 of his knights were drowned.



### ETERNAL WARRIOR

Outside the House of Lords, Richard I is commemorated by this grand statue of him in full battle mode

route back to England by sea wasn't an option either. In the end, it was decided to travel through eastern Germany to Moravia, where a group of princes, led by Richard's brother-in-law Henry the Lion, were opposed to the Holy Roman Emperor. The only problem was it involved travelling through the territory of his old enemy, Leopold of Austria.

In October 1192, Richard left the Holy Land for Corfu, where he hired galleys and headed north into the Adriatic with a handful of trusted companions. The weather was stormy and they ultimately landed, or were shipwrecked, in December on the northern Adriatic coast at Aquileia, near Trieste in north-eastern Italy, from where they headed for Moravia disguised as pilgrims.

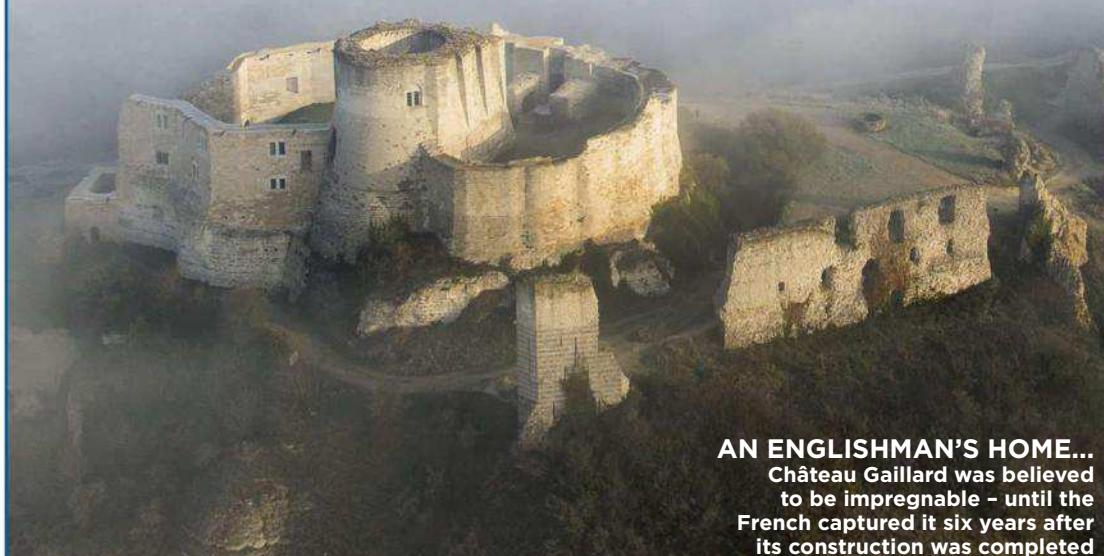
They had reached the outskirts of Vienna, perhaps just 50 miles from safety, when their cover was blown. Some suggest it was the luxury provisions his companions kept buying him that revealed his identity; others say it was that they kept calling him 'sire'. Another account suggests he was given away by one of his party being spotted with a pair of the king's monogrammed gloves stuck in his belt. Whatever the reason, the tavern in which Richard was staying was soon surrounded by a hostile crowd and the King, abandoning his disguise, was forced to surrender to Duke Leopold.

Leopold locked Richard up in Dürnstein Castle on the Danube and

## RICHARD'S HQ

### Castle in the sky

In 1196, Richard began the greatest and most expensive building project of his reign when he ordered the construction of a mighty castle on a rock above the Seine. Château Gaillard was built to protect Normandy from Philip II and to act as a base from which Richard could launch his campaign to recapture the Vexin. Constructed in just two years at the staggering cost of at least £15,000, the castle represented the latest in military technology. Built around a powerful keep, its concentric design allowed an attacker to be shot at from a number of walls at the same time. It was also one of the first Western castles to have machicolations – projecting stone galleries that enabled missiles to be dropped onto attackers' heads. Despite its formidable defences, though, it fell to the French after a long siege in 1204, opening the way for their total conquest of Normandy.



AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOME...  
Château Gaillard was believed to be impregnable – until the French captured it six years after its construction was completed

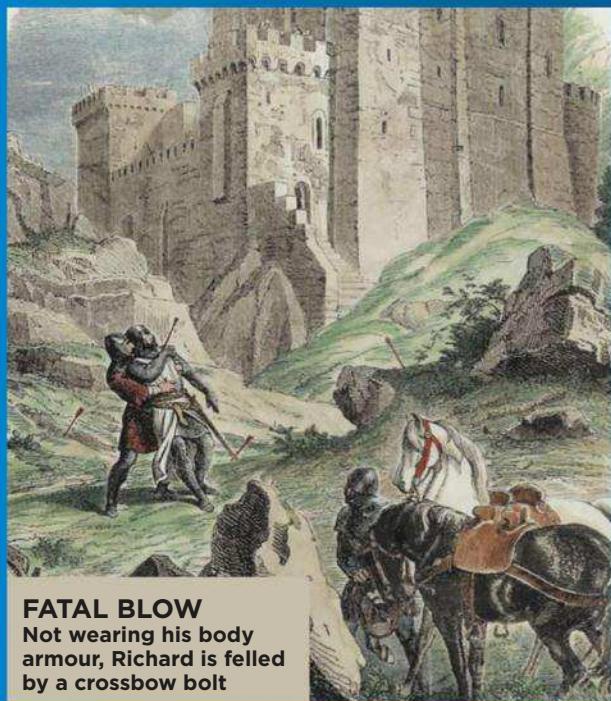
## BOLT FROM THE BLUE

### Death of a King

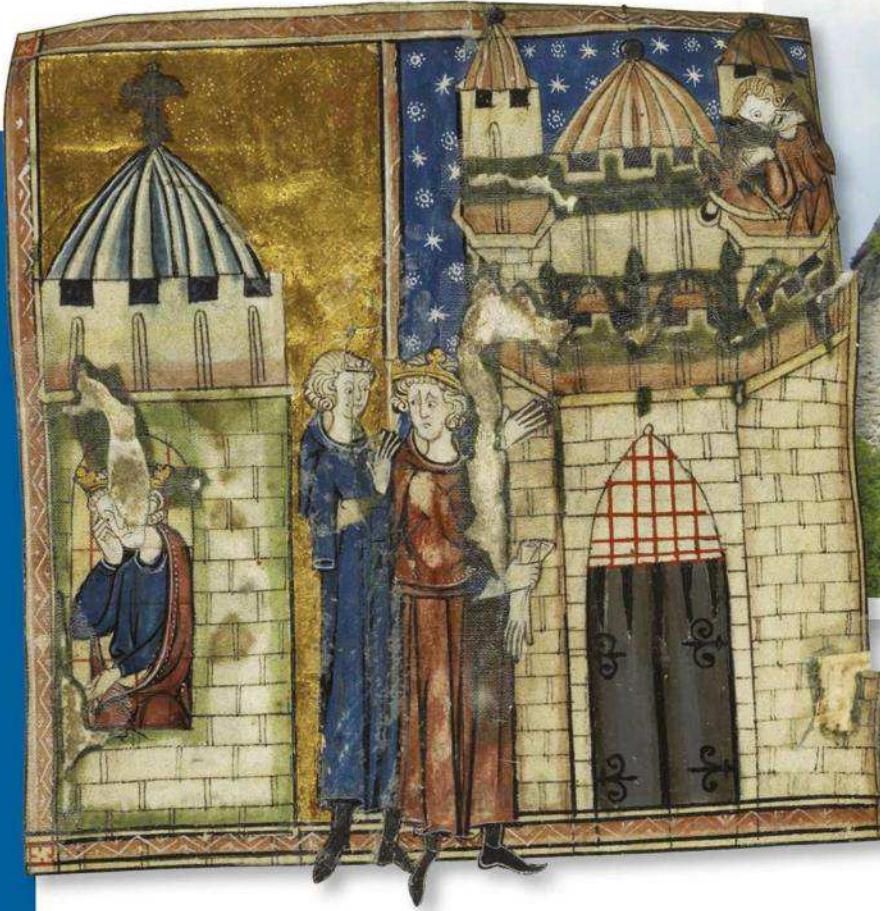
Richard took a devil-may-care attitude to danger... and finally paid the price. In March 1199, he was campaigning in the Limousin region of central France where he was suppressing a rebellion by his vassal, the Viscount of Limoges. After laying waste to the recalcitrant viscount's lands, he moved on to lay siege to the little castle of Chalus-Chabrol. Accounts vary as to why he did this. Some claimed that Richard wanted to get his hands on a hoard of Roman treasure that had recently been dug up by a peasant and was being stored there, but it seems more likely that the capture of the castle was simply a military necessity.

On the evening of 26 March, without bothering to put on his body armour, Richard went out to inspect the progress of his sappers, who were trying to undermine the castle wall. Suddenly he was hit by a crossbow bolt at the junction of his neck and shoulder. Hiding the pain, Richard rode back to his quarters and gritted his teeth as a surgeon dug around in his shoulder in an attempt to remove the bolt.

The following day, a patched-up Richard continued to direct siege operations, but on the morning of 28 March, the putrid smell coming from the wound left him in no doubt that his fate was sealed – gangrene had set in. He sent for his mother and waited for the inevitable. Richard was still alive when the castle fell and the crossbowman who had shot the fatal bolt was brought before him. Ever one to admire a feat of arms, Richard forgave the man and ordered him to be released unharmed. Shortly after, Richard died in his mother's arms. The crossbowman was flayed alive.



**FATAL BLOW**  
Not wearing his body armour, Richard is felled by a crossbow bolt



## RICHARD DEFENDED HIMSELF SO ELOQUENTLY AND CONFIDENTLY THAT THE CHARGES WERE DROPPED

informed his overlord, the Holy Roman Emperor, about his piece of good fortune. Henry, in his turn, gloatingly informed Philip of France about what had happened. Pope Celestine III was less impressed, as a papal decree had ordered that crusading knights were not to be molested on their journey to and from the Holy Land. He excommunicated both Duke Leopold and Emperor Henry for seizing Richard, but they clearly thought this was a small price to pay for getting hold of their enemy.

For more than a year, Leopold and Henry haggled over who should own Richard. Eventually Leopold accepted the promise of 20,000 marks from any eventual ransom and, on 14 February 1193, he handed Richard over to Henry. In March, at his Easter Court at Speier, Henry charged Richard with a long list of crimes, including betraying the Holy Land and plotting the murder of Conrad of Montferrat. But Richard defended himself so eloquently and confidently that even his enemies were

impressed and the charges were dropped. It was here however that Richard agreed to pay a ransom of 100,000 marks for his release.

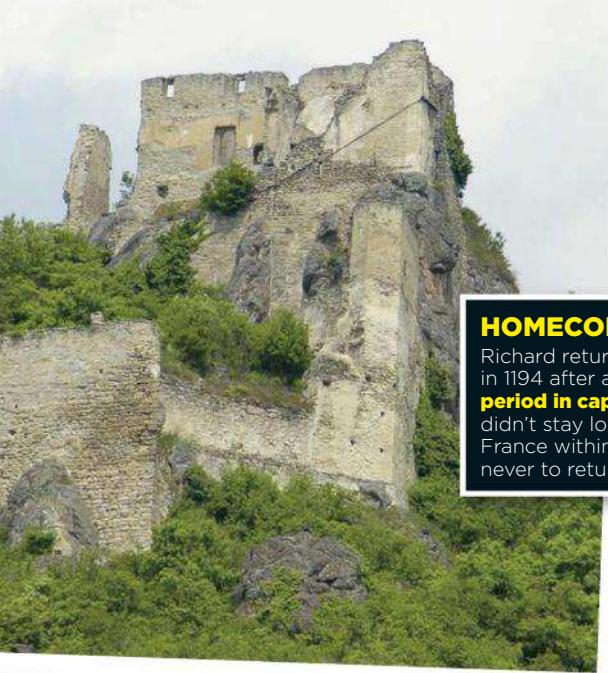
### TIME TO NEGOTIATE

Richard was moved from fortress to fortress in the lands controlled by Henry and Leopold. In mid-March, he was at Ochsenfurt and it was here that two English emissaries, the Abbots of Robertsbridge and Boxley, made contact with him, the point at which negotiations for his ransom began. There is, alas, no evidence to support the oft-repeated story that Richard's place of imprisonment was found by his friend, the troubadour

Blondel, who went from castle to castle playing his lute outside the walls until he heard a familiar voice singing along to the tune he was playing. In reality, of course, Henry and Leopold had nothing to gain from hiding Richard's whereabouts if they wanted to negotiate his release and receive the ransom.

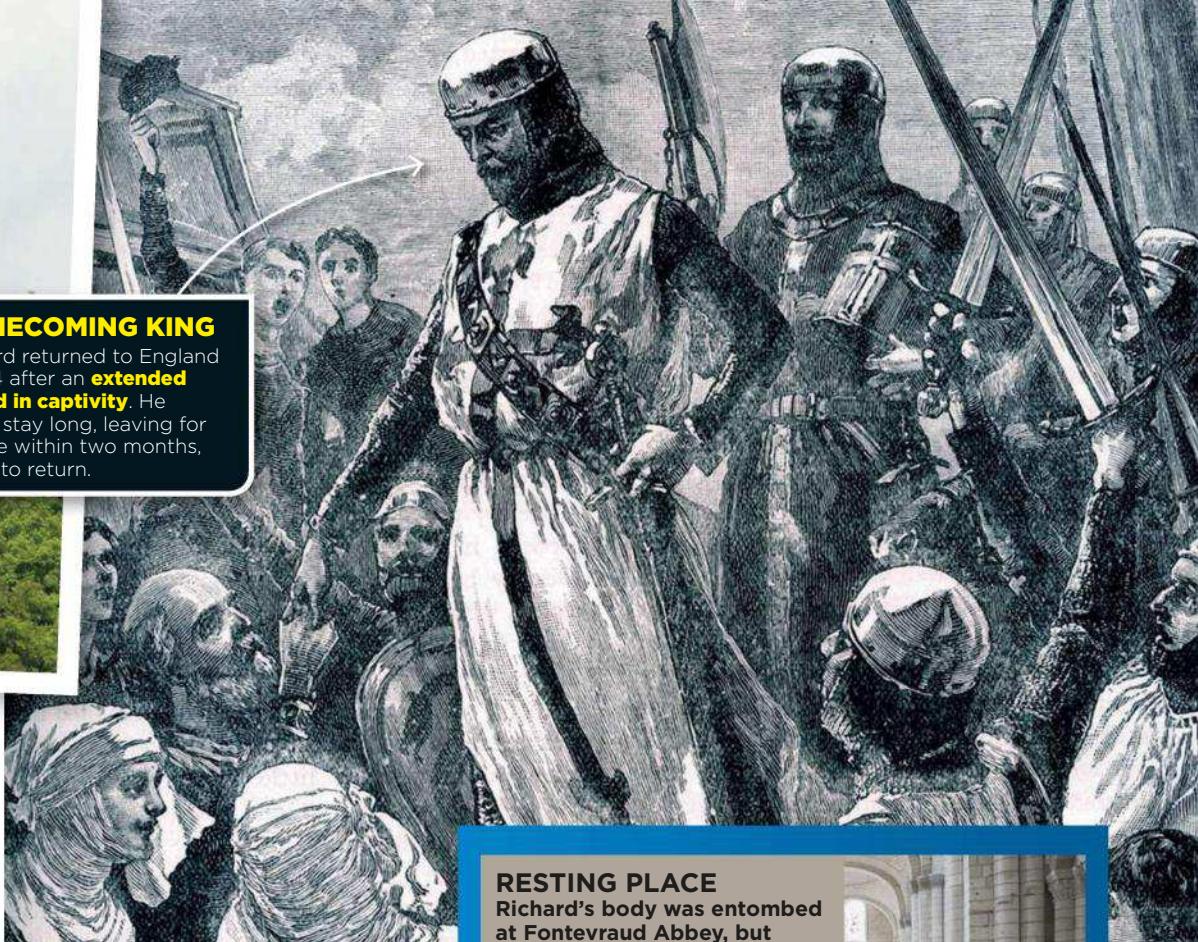
### DID YOU KNOW?

Richard was so appreciative of his chef that he knighted him, making him Lord of the Fief of the Kitchen of the Counts of Poitou



### HOMECOMING KING

Richard returned to England in 1194 after an **extended period in captivity**. He didn't stay long, leaving for France within two months, never to return.



### KINGLY CAPTURE

LEFT: Because he had made so many enemies in Europe, Richard's return from the Holy Land was perilous and he ended up imprisoned and held to ransom by Duke Leopold at Dürnstein Castle in Austria. ABOVE: The ruins of the castle today

Negotiations for Richard's release took the best part of a year and it took an enormous effort to raise the ransom in a country already impoverished by funding Richard's Crusade. One hundred thousand marks was an enormous sum; it has been subsequently calculated as perhaps twice the gross domestic product of the whole of England at the time. Eventually the money was raised and, in early February 1194, it was handed over to Henry.

On 13 March, Richard landed at Sandwich in Kent and then, after visiting the shrines of Canterbury and Bury St Edmunds, moved on to Nottingham. It was here where the last of John's garrisons were still holding out and,

after some fierce fighting, Richard's soldiers forced a surrender. On 17 April, he wore his crown in state at Winchester. Less than a month later, after forgiving his brother for his misdemeanours, he sailed to Normandy, never to return to England again. ☠

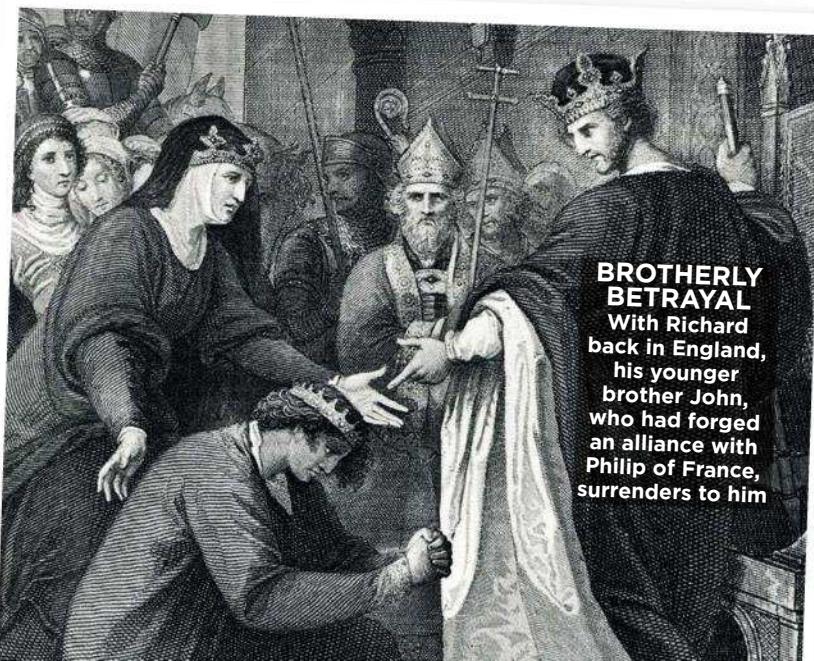
### GET HOOKED

#### READ

*The Crusades: the War for the Holy Land* by Thomas Asbridge (Simon & Schuster, 2010)

#### VISIT

Château Gaillard, the castle that Richard built above the River Seine and the village of Les Andelys in Normandy



**BROTHERLY BETRAYAL**  
With Richard back in England, his younger brother John, who had forged an alliance with Philip of France, surrenders to him

### RESTING PLACE

Richard's body was entombed at Fontevraud Abbey, but was later removed during the French Revolution



### BEYOND DEATH

## Royal remains

Richard's body was divided up after his death – common practice among the aristocracy at the time. His entrails were removed and buried at Chalus, his heart was embalmed and sent for burial at Notre Dame in Rouen, and his body was buried beside that of his father Henry II in Fontevraud Abbey. Remorseful over his role in his father's death, Richard had asked to be buried at his feet. England received nothing at all.

Richard's once brightly painted effigy remains in Fontevraud, but his body has gone, a victim of the suppression of the abbey during the French Revolution. His heart was rediscovered in 1838 during excavations at Rouen. It had long since turned to dust but recent forensic examinations have revealed that it was once embalmed with mercury, spices, sweet-smelling plants and frankincense. While this was necessary to ensure that the heart arrived in Rouen in reasonable condition, it has been suggested that the choice of frankincense may well have been inspired by biblical texts and used to give the heart an odour of sanctity.

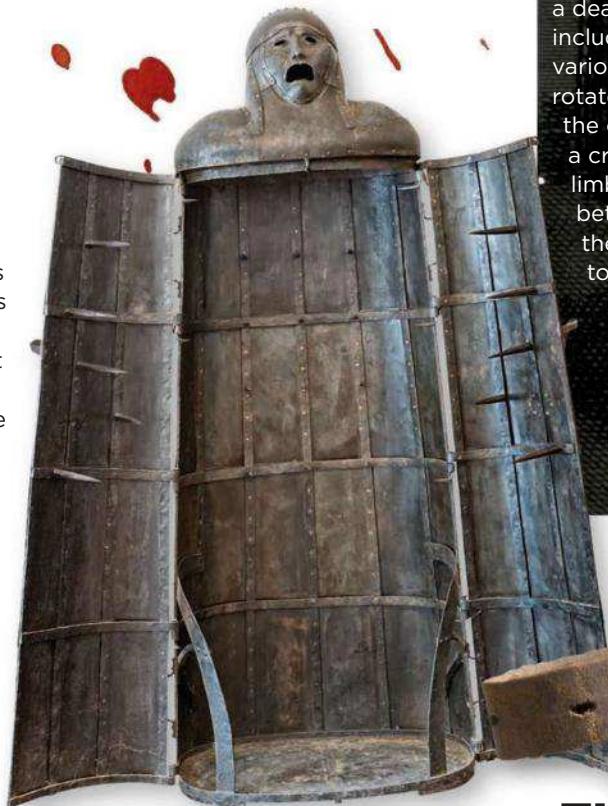
**WARNING:  
NOT FOR THE  
FAINT HEARTED**

# Medieval torture Methods

To extract information and execute criminals in the most painful ways possible, medieval torturers became highly imaginative...

## THE IRON MAIDEN

The mere sight of this huge upright coffin - which supposedly dates back to the Middle Ages - strikes fear into the eyes of its beholder. But only those unfortunate enough to end up inside know its true horror. Lined with strategically placed spikes to penetrate the victim's most sensitive parts - but, crucially, to avoid the vital organs - the doors are slowly shut. Death follows even more slowly, as the Maiden can take days to claim its victim.



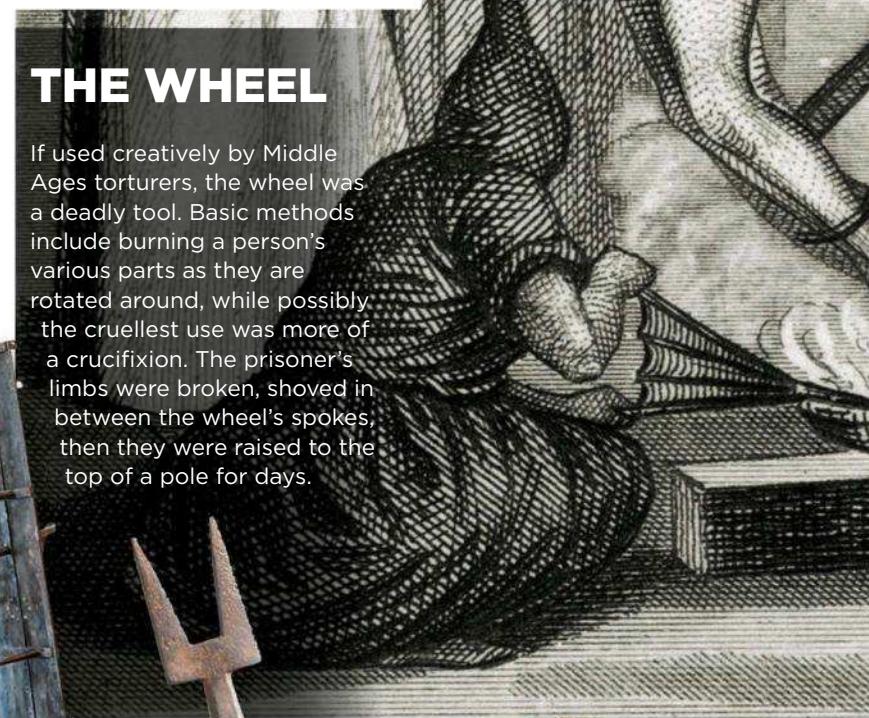
## THE RACK

Often considered the most painful torture of them all, a stretch on the rack left you more than a little looser. It would dislocate limbs with a loud crack - and an overzealous torturer could even rip off arms. Although designed for extracting information, this device did often kill - or, at best, left you crippled.



## THE WHEEL

If used creatively by Middle Ages torturers, the wheel was a deadly tool. Basic methods include burning a person's various parts as they are rotated around, while possibly the cruellest use was more of a crucifixion. The prisoner's limbs were broken, shoved in between the wheel's spokes, then they were raised to the top of a pole for days.



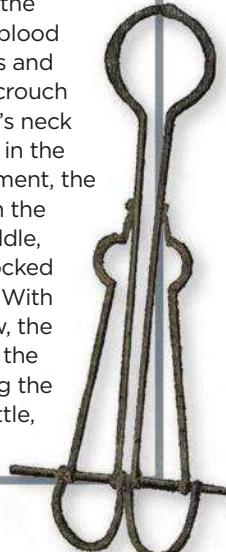
## THE HERETIC FORK

This nasty instrument was reserved for heretics. After a confession, the collar is wrapped around the neck, with the fork prongs sinking their way into the chest at one end and the chin at the other. The head is forced up and back, causing extreme discomfort, and the dissenter is often thrown in jail while subjected to the torture.



## SCAVENGER'S DAUGHTER

Designed to crush the body, this device could crack bones, dislocate the spine, and force blood out from the ears and nose. Forced to crouch down, the victim's neck would be placed in the top of the instrument, the wrists encased in the hoops at the middle, and the ankles locked into the bottom. With a twist of a screw, the torturer tightens the device, squeezing the victim, little by little, to death.



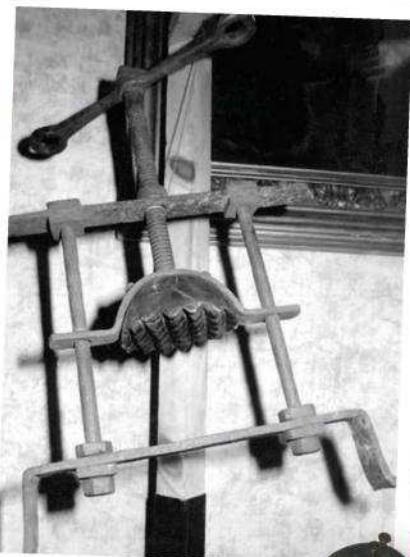


## THE BRAZEN BULL

Invented in Ancient Greece, medieval torturers were fans of this cruel apparatus. The condemned is placed inside a hollow metal bull and a fire is ignited beneath – essentially burning the person alive. For any witnesses, the muffled deathly screams sound more like a cow, the dying prisoner's movements make the bull twist and turn, and all the steam and smoke within is funnelled out through the ox's nostrils. It really does look like a brazen bull.

## HEAD CRUSHER

Supposedly a favourite of the Spanish Inquisition, this contraption does exactly what its name suggests. With the prisoner's chin placed on the bottom plank, a turn of the crank crushes the cranium. In some instances, death comes only after the victim's teeth have broken from the pressure and the eyeballs have popped out of their sockets.



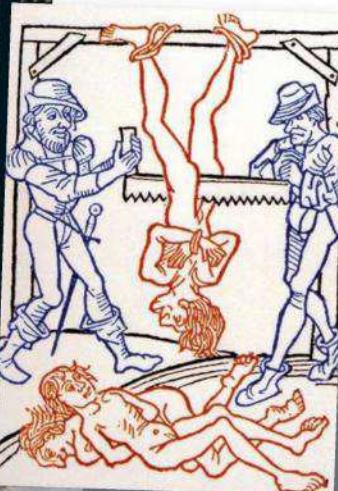
## BREAST RIPPER

If a woman was suspected of having an abortion or of committing adultery, she might find herself on the wrong end of these prongs. After inserting the forks – sometimes hot from the fire – into the breasts, the torturer rips the bosoms apart. If the prisoner survives the pain and blood loss, her chest is left mutilated.



## SAW TORTURE

Simple but effective, saw torture could be conducted without any specialist equipment, and was dished out as a punishment for all sorts – witchcraft, blasphemy and theft, to name but a few. But its simplicity should not be underestimated. The victim is hung upside down so as to slow blood flow to the sliced area, and also to keep blood in the head, thus maximising consciousness and pain, and prolonging death.



## JUDAS CRADLE

Being impaled on this pointed 'seat' for days may not kill a person, but infection would – the device was rarely cleaned. Some torturers hang weights off their victims' legs, while others oil the point to push up the pain.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

Know any worse torture devices?

Let us know!

email: [editor@historyrevealed.com](mailto:editor@historyrevealed.com)



# THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR

England v France: the ultimate medieval game of thrones

**T**he war that outlasted lifetimes, the medieval grudge match of England v France has gone down as the longest conflict in history. Hostilities began in 1337, when Philip VI of France tried to confiscate Edward III's French territories. Edward hit back by claiming the crown of France, sparking a conflict which, despite some lengthy truces, would not end for 116 years.

The war divided the nations then, and its legacy still divides them today. The English remember their great triumphs of Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt, while the French focus on the heroism of Joan of Arc and France's ultimate victory.

Journey back to a time of battles and sieges, chivalry and brutality, and discover some of the larger-than-life characters from this real-life game of thrones.

## NOW READ ON...

### NEED TO KNOW

- 1 The Hundred Years War in a Nutshell p54
- 2 War Zones p56
- 3 Secrets of Success p58
- 4 Fighting Dirty p59
- 5 Warrior Life p60

### TIMELINE

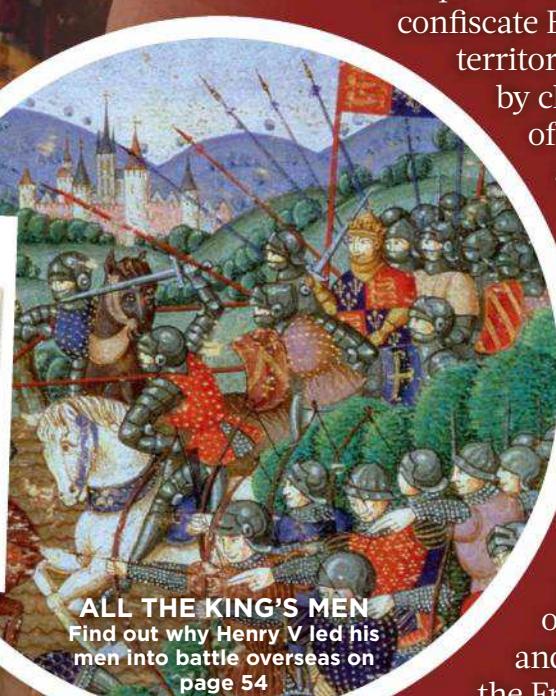
Follow the key moments in this epic fight for France  
p62

### JOAN OF ARC

The peasant girl who saved a city  
p64

### GET HOOKED

Explore more of the Hundred Years War  
p71



**ALL THE KING'S MEN**  
Find out why Henry V led his men into battle overseas on page 54

**WE HAPPY FEW**

Although this French illustration shows Henry V leading **abundant forces** into battle at Agincourt, his troops were in fact heavily outnumbered.

**BANNER SPLIT**

Henry V underlies his **claim to the French throne** by quartering the lilies of France with the leopards of England.

**SHOOT TO WIN**

Henry's archers played a vital role in the victory at Agincourt

1

# THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR IN A NUTSHELL

*A clash of egos, armies and honour sees medieval England and France engage in bitter combat*

**T**hough called the Hundred Years War, this conflict was not one war, nor did it last exactly a century. In fact, it was a series of wars waged from 1337-1453, between the kings of England and the French house of Valois. In the early 14th century, the English ruler held lands in France as a vassal of the French king. As a vassal, Edward III owed homage to Philip VI of France. But these two kings were supposedly equal, which created a recipe for trouble. Matters were worsened by French support for the Scots against the English, and English support for the Flemish, their trading partners, against France.

**EDWARD III**

In 1337, the simmering tensions over Edward's homage boiled over and Philip VI declared that he had confiscated the English king's lands.

Edward hit back, declaring that he was in fact the rightful king of France, as his mother, Isabella, had been the sister of the previous French king. The two countries went to war. Initial campaigns were inconclusive but in 1346, the English won a major victory at Crécy and then, ten years later, captured the King of France, John II, at Poitiers. But Edward was unable to land the knockout blow and, in 1360, he agreed the Treaty of Bretigny, giving up his claim to the French throne in exchange for vast swathes of French land. War resumed in 1369 and, over the next 20 years, the French recaptured much of the land lost in 1360.

**HENRY V**

There then followed a peace of some 30 years until, in 1415, Henry V revived the old claim

to the French throne. He won a stunning victory at Agincourt, which was followed by the methodical conquest of Normandy. It was then agreed that, on the death of Charles VI, the French king at the time, Henry or his heirs should inherit the French throne. Charles's son, the Dauphin, fought on in central France.

Although Henry V died young in 1422, the English continued to gain ground, but they were becoming overstretched. In 1429, the French broke the Siege of Orléans and had the Dauphin crowned King Charles VII.

The English lacked the resources to hold onto the lands they had conquered and, over the next 20 years, were steadily pushed back. When their last army was destroyed at Castillon in 1453, all that remained of their French territories was Calais and the Channel Islands.

**3,774**

English corpses were counted from an army of 4,000 at Formigny

## KEY CHARACTERS

# THE HUNDRED YEARS WARRIOR

With over a century of disputes and battles, treaties and sieges, the main players of this conflict cover several generations – on both sides of the Channel. Here are the names you need to know...

**1312-1377**

### Edward III of England

► Edward III staked his claim to the French throne and initiated the Hundred Years War. He was obsessed with ideals of chivalry and founded the Order of the Garter.

**1386-1422**

### Henry V of England

► King from 1413, he was pious, able and ruthless. Revived the English claim to the French throne. Victor at Agincourt and conqueror of Normandy.

**1412-1431**

### Joan of Arc

► A peasant girl who revived French fortunes in the Hundred Years War. Follow her remarkable story on page 64.

**1389-1435**

### John, Duke of Bedford

Regent of France for his nephew Henry VI. An able soldier and a good administrator, he oversaw the trial and execution of Joan of Arc.

**1403-1461**

### Charles VII of France

The son of Charles VI. He was crowned King of France at Reims in 1429, thanks to the efforts of Joan of Arc.

**1330-1376**

### Edward the Black Prince

The son of Edward III, he fought at Crécy when he was only 16. A fearsome, sometimes brutal warrior, he died in 1376, a year before his father.

**1319-1364**

### John II of France

► An affable and brave leader, but a poor commander, John was captured at Poitiers and released on the promise of a huge ransom. When he failed to meet the terms of his ransom, he voluntarily returned to England.

**1320-1380**

### Bertrand du Guesclin

A Breton knight and able military commander who did much to win back the lands lost to the English through the Treaty of Bretigny.

**1368-1422**

### Charles VI of France

King from 1380, Charles VI was subject to bouts of insanity, which led him to attack his servants and to believe he was made of glass.

**1387-1453**

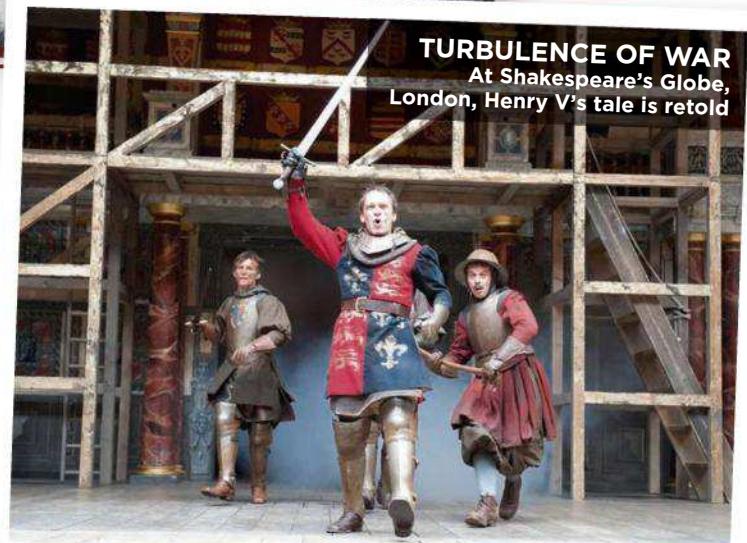
### John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury

► Also known as 'The English Achilles' and 'The Terror of the French', he was a veteran soldier who successfully defended Normandy in the 1430s and 1440s. He was killed at Castillon in 1453.

## BARD'S EYE VIEW

### SHAKESPEARE'S REWRITES

Shakespeare covers the war in three plays. *Edward III*, a play that has only recently been attributed to him, *Henry V* and *Henry VI part one*. Most of his histories are based on the work of chronicler Raphael Holinshed, but Shakespeare was a dramatist, not a historian. He frequently compressed or altered the sequence of events to help the story he was telling. In *Edward III*, he places the Battle of Poitiers (1356) immediately after the Battle of Crécy (1346). In *Henry V*, the Treaty of Troyes is seen as the direct result of Agincourt, as if the siege warfare of Henry's second invasion of France never took place.



# WAR ZONES

England's claims turned much of France into a battlefield

**A**lthough Edward III claimed the French throne, he was primarily concerned with securing and extending his lands in west-central France. He was initially successful, but the French later won back most of their lost lands.

Henry V took the claim to the throne of France more seriously than Edward III had. He took great advantage of the fact that France had been divided by the Armagnac-Burgundian Civil War (which began in 1407), using the division to conquer much of the northern part of the country. The English were helped by an alliance with the Burgundians. When that relationship came to an end in 1435, the writing was on the wall for the English. Their territories were steadily overrun, until only Calais and the Channel Islands remained.

## BORDER CONTROL

## EVER-CHANGING LANDS

With each side enjoying victory and tasting defeat at different times, maps of the Hundred Years War show how entire regions changed hands over time. Both Edward III and Henry V gained control of large amounts of land, only for the French to gradually win them back.

1337 Before the Battle of Crécy



1360 After the Treaty of Bretigny



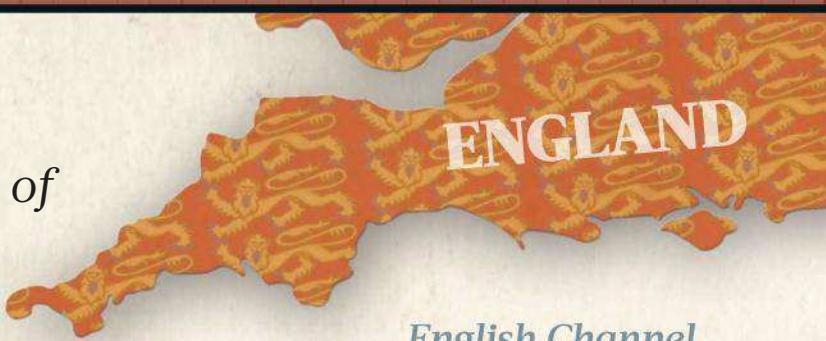
1429 After the Siege of Orléans



1453 End of the war



Legend:  
■ English holdings   ■ Burgundian lands allied with England to 1435  
■ French holdings   ■ Burgundian lands reconciled with France after 1435



English Channel

### 7. BATTLE OF FORMIGNY

**WHEN:** 15 April 1450

**WHERE:** Lower Normandy, France

**WHO:** c4,000 Englishmen (Thomas Kyriell) v c5,000 French and Bretons (Duke of Bourbon)

**WHAT HAPPENED:** The English archers adopt a strong position but are defeated by French artillery. The arrival of Breton reinforcements completes the destruction of the English army.

**RESULT:** English driven out of Normandy.

Formigny  
1450

Rennes

Nantes

### 5. BATTLE OF VERNEUIL

**WHEN:** 17 August 1424

**WHERE:** Upper Normandy, France

**WHO:** 10,000 Englishmen (Duke of Bedford) v 16,000 Franco-Scots (John of Harcourt, Archibald Douglas)

**WHAT HAPPENED:** Described as 'a second Agincourt', French mercenary cavalry scatter the English archers but the English men-at-arms hold firm, drive back the French and surround their Scottish allies who are virtually wiped out.

**RESULT:** The English consolidate their hold on Normandy.

La Rochelle  
1372

### 3. BATTLE OF POITIERS

**WHEN:** 19 September 1356

**WHERE:** Poitou, west-central France

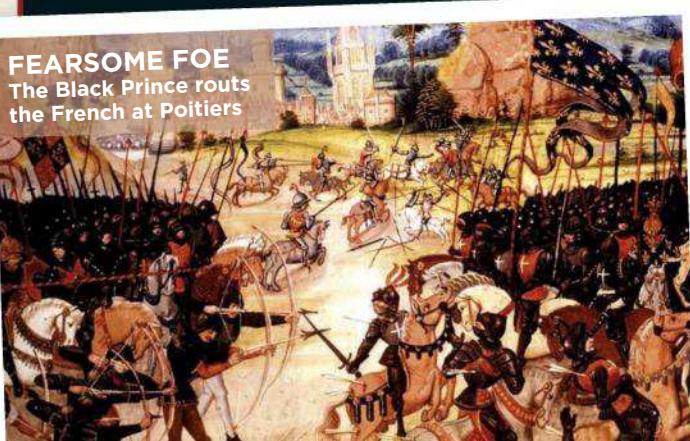
**WHO:** 6-7,000 English and Gascons (Black Prince) v 14,000 Frenchmen (John II)

**WHAT HAPPENED:** An English raiding party under the Black Prince is caught and attacked by the French. The French nearly break through but are defeated after Edward orders his small mounted reserve to ride around the French flank and attack them from the rear.

**RESULT:** King John II of France is captured. He is later freed on payment of a huge ransom.

Bordeaux

**FEAR SOME FOE**  
The Black Prince routs the French at Poitiers





## CLASH AT CRÉCY

MAIN: Edward III defeats Philip VI at Crécy in 1346

BELOW: In the 14th century, cannons first made their way onto the battlefield



## EXPLOSIVE INNOVATION

Gunpowder weapons were quite **new inventions** during the Hundred Years War. The English may have used guns at Crécy, though they only really began to **make an impact** in the 15th century.

## ARROWSTORM

The English longbows proved lethal against the crossbow. Around **10,000 Frenchmen** died at Crécy, as opposed to just **500 English**.

3

## SECRETS OF SUCCESS

*Tactics on the battlefield proved just as important as numbers*

Whereas 50 years earlier, King Edward I had relied on the mobilisation of his huge military resources to defeat the Welsh and Scots, Edward III and Henry V were faced with the problem of combatting the much larger armies, including armoured knights, of the French. Fortunately for the English, by the outbreak of the Hundred Years War, they had perfected the combination of archers and dismounted men-at-arms that was to prove so deadly on so many battlefields.

ALAMY XI, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES XI, GETTY X3, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK XI

1.19

The number of arrows, in millions, that were prepared for the invasion of Normandy

nearly break the English line. In the end, the battle was won by a charge from the Gascon cavalry, who were fighting for the English.

At Agincourt, in 1415, the English occupied a strong position. Their flanks were protected by woodland and their front by sharpened

wooden stakes that they'd hammered into the ground. A half-baked French cavalry charge was driven back by the English archers and the retreating horsemen crashed into the main body of advancing dismounted French men-at-arms.

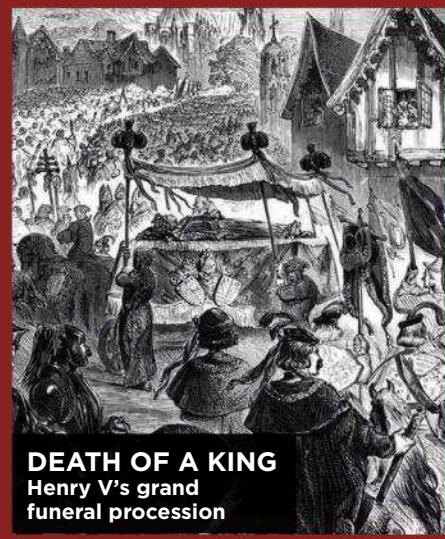
The disorganised French struggled on through thick mud to attack the

English lines. When they got there, they were tired and so crowded together that they were barely able to fight. The lightly equipped English archers now joined the fray, throwing down their bows and laying about the French with swords, axes and the mallets they'd used for hammering in their stakes. The arrival of more French men-at-arms merely added to the crush and pushed those at the front onto the waiting English weapons. Thousands were killed or captured.

The French first encountered this formidable way of fighting at Crécy, in 1346. Their advancing cavalry was severely galled by the English archers and, although the French reached their lines, the invader's men-at-arms held firm. At Poitiers, the French tried to counter the English tactics by advancing on foot themselves, with swords, axes and cut-down lances, but were still vulnerable to archery and quickly became exhausted. Even so, they did

SICK TO THE STOMACH  
AILING ARMIES

When an army marched, disease went with it. Sickness was the great equaliser – it affected anyone, be they blue blood or peasant. By the time Henry captured Harfleur after a five-week siege in 1415, 2,000 of his men – including noblemen – had died from dysentery. Many had made the fatal mistake of eating shellfish from the polluted Seine estuary. Another 2,000 were sent home to recuperate. Many who then went on to Agincourt with Henry were also sick, and are said to have removed their hose so they could defecate as they marched. Henry V himself died an early and undignified death from dysentery, after capturing Meaux in 1422.

DEATH OF A KING  
Henry V's grand funeral procession

# FIGHTING DIRTY

*The soldiers rarely kept their hands, or their consciences, clean...*

**D**espite tales of honour, kindness and courage that follow the chivalrous knights of the time, medieval warfare was often brutally different. Tacticians used a number of ploys, many of which led to the suffering of civilians as much as soldiers. With tactics designed to terrify, destroy and impoverish, chivalry – at least the modern understanding of it – went out the window.



**“SHOW HIM YOUR CROSS”**  
As English soldiers set fire to a town, a nun attempts to protect her abbey

## RAVAGE AND RANSACK

### SIEGE WARFARE

The Black Prince and Henry V had very different approaches to discipline. The former used plundering to wage war, whereas the latter largely forbade robbery. Normally, however, if a town that refused to surrender to invaders were to fall, its contents became fair game. When Limoges was recaptured by the Black Prince in 1370, it became a site of plunder and slaughter. Caen was also bloodily sacked in 1417. During the Siege of Rouen in 1418-1419, the defenders cast women and children out of the city – they were using up supplies but not contributing to its defence. Henry refused to let them into his camp and they huddled, starving, under the city walls.

## HIGH RANSOM

To get his freedom, John II had to give nearly **a third of France** to the English, plus **3,000,000 gold écus** (coins).

## HIS ROYAL HOSTAGE

The English capture John II of France at Poitiers



## CAPTURE

### PRISONERS OF WAR

A knight who was taken prisoner in battle could normally expect to be treated well by his captors. He was worth looking after, as he could be ransomed for a healthy sum of money. What's more, the captors would hope for similarly good treatment if they were taken prisoner themselves.

King John II of France was treated as an honoured guest by the English after his capture at Poitiers, but if the hundreds of French knights who surrendered at Agincourt were hoping for similar treatment they were in for a shock. Concerned by the large numbers of captured Frenchmen milling about behind his lines and worried about a possible final French attack, Henry V ordered their immediate execution. A company of archers was dispatched to do the grisly work. Interestingly, Henry was not condemned by his contemporaries for this. Instead, they blamed the French; if they hadn't refused to accept defeat, Henry would not have been forced into action.

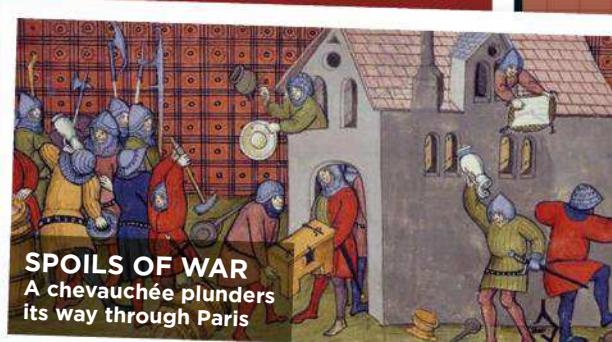
**IF A TOWN THAT REFUSED TO SURRENDER WERE TO FALL, ITS CONTENTS BECAME FAIR GAME...**

## SCORCHED EARTH

### THE CHEVAUCHEÉ

A popular English tactic during the first part of the war was the ‘chevauchée’. Instead of trying to conquer an area of enemy territory, the participants simply rode through it, destroying crops, looting property and burning villages. A successful chevauchée would reduce the targeted region's productivity, undermine the credibility of those who were supposed to protect it, and provide rich pickings for anyone who took part in it.

The Black Prince launched two destructive chevauchées through central France, one in 1355 and another the following year. The second of these led, when the French intercepted it, to the Battle of Poitiers.



**SPOILS OF WAR**  
A chevauchée plunders its way through Paris

One of the largest chevauchées of all took place in 1373, when John of Gaunt led 9,000 men out of Calais in an epic (and expensive) 500-mile raid. It was a remarkable military feat but achieved little. When Gaunt's army finally reached English-held Bordeaux, it had lost a third of its men and most of its horses.

## MEDIEVAL MUSCLE

## MAN-AT-ARMS

Getting right up close to the action – engaging in bloody hand-to-hand, sword-to-sword and even axe-to-axe combat – were the men-at-arms. Well trained, well equipped and led by knights or nobles, they provided the muscle of a medieval army. French men-at-arms had largely ruled supreme on the battlefield but they met their match against the English archers.

## BASCINET

A dog-faced visored helmet with an aventail – a mail collar to protect the neck and shoulders.

**SHIELD**  
This offered protection against blows and arrows, and carried the coat of arms of the bearer.

## THE ENGLISH

The soldiers of the English armies that sailed to France during the Hundred Years War were largely volunteers fighting for fame and, often more importantly, fortune.

Some fighters were members of the personal retinues of important men of the time – in the early 1420s, for example, the Duke of Bedford supplied a force of 100 men-at-arms and some 300 archers. However, many soldiers were recruited for a specific campaign, joining indentured companies. The individual captains of said companies would be contracted to supply a given number of troops for a set period of time.

There were normally two or three archers for every man-at-arms in the English army, which proved to be a potent combination. As the invaders gained more towns and castles in France, permanent garrisons had to be set up and managed.

## THE FRENCH

By contrast, French armies largely comprised members of the aristocracy and their feudal tenants. At the outbreak of the war, all French men could theoretically have been called up, through a general levy known as the *arrière-ban*. This was soon abandoned in favour of either a cash payment or the recruitment of troops in specific towns or areas.

Because they were defending their own country, the French were seldom short of men. However, keeping them supplied, organised and disciplined was quite another matter.

## FOREIGN CONTINGENTS

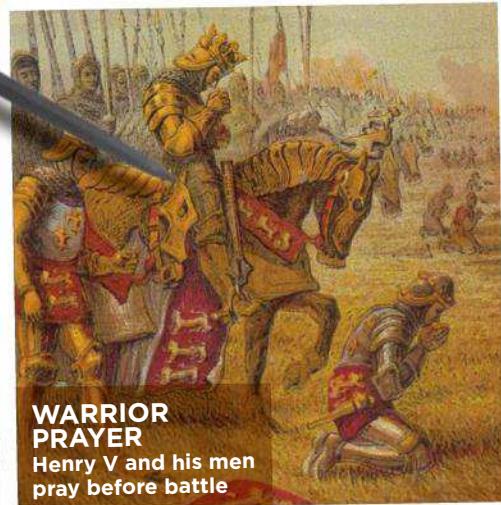
Both sides' armies included foreign soldiers. The alliance with the Burgundians was crucial to English success in the 1420s and, earlier on, a Gascon cavalry charge had helped the Black Prince secure a win at the Battle of Poitiers (1356). Genoese crossbowmen fought for the French at the Battles of Crécy and Poitiers, as did contingents of Scots in the 15th century.

## THE ENGLISH VOLUNTEERS WERE FIGHTING FOR FAME AND FORTUNE

GETTY XI

## PLATE ARMOUR

By the end of the Hundred Years War, a well-equipped man-at-arms would have been completely encased in plate armour.



ALAMY X3, © ROYAL ARMOURIES X2

## PRAYER

Religion was an integral part of medieval life, and armies were no exception. Larger contingents of soldiers brought friars or chaplains with them on campaign. Before a battle, English soldiers carried out a ritual in which they would kneel, make the sign of the cross upon the ground and kiss it before taking a piece of earth in their mouths.



## SWIFT SHOOTER ENGLISH ARCHER

Archery practice was compulsory at home, and it seems likely that archers would have continued to practice while on campaign to keep up their skills. They practiced by shooting at 'butts' – targets attached to mounds of earth – or by 'clout shooting', where they shot up into the air, aiming to drop their arrows onto a large piece of cloth stretched out over the ground.

**TABARD**  
Many English soldiers simply wore a small cross of St George stitched to their clothing.

## PROFANITY

While the story that the 'V' sign originated with English archers – who supposedly waggled two fingers at their enemies to show they were ready to shoot their bows – is likely to be apocryphal, there is no disputing the fact that English soldiers were known for their bad language. Indeed the French dubbed the English 'Goddams' after the oath they kept overhearing.



## PAY

Early on, an English archer was paid 3d a day, 6d if he was mounted. A ploughman would need two weeks to earn that. In theory, the archers were paid quarterly and in advance, yet in practice pay was often in arrears, especially near the end of the wars.



**TO THE VICTOR...**  
Precious spoils of France ended up in England

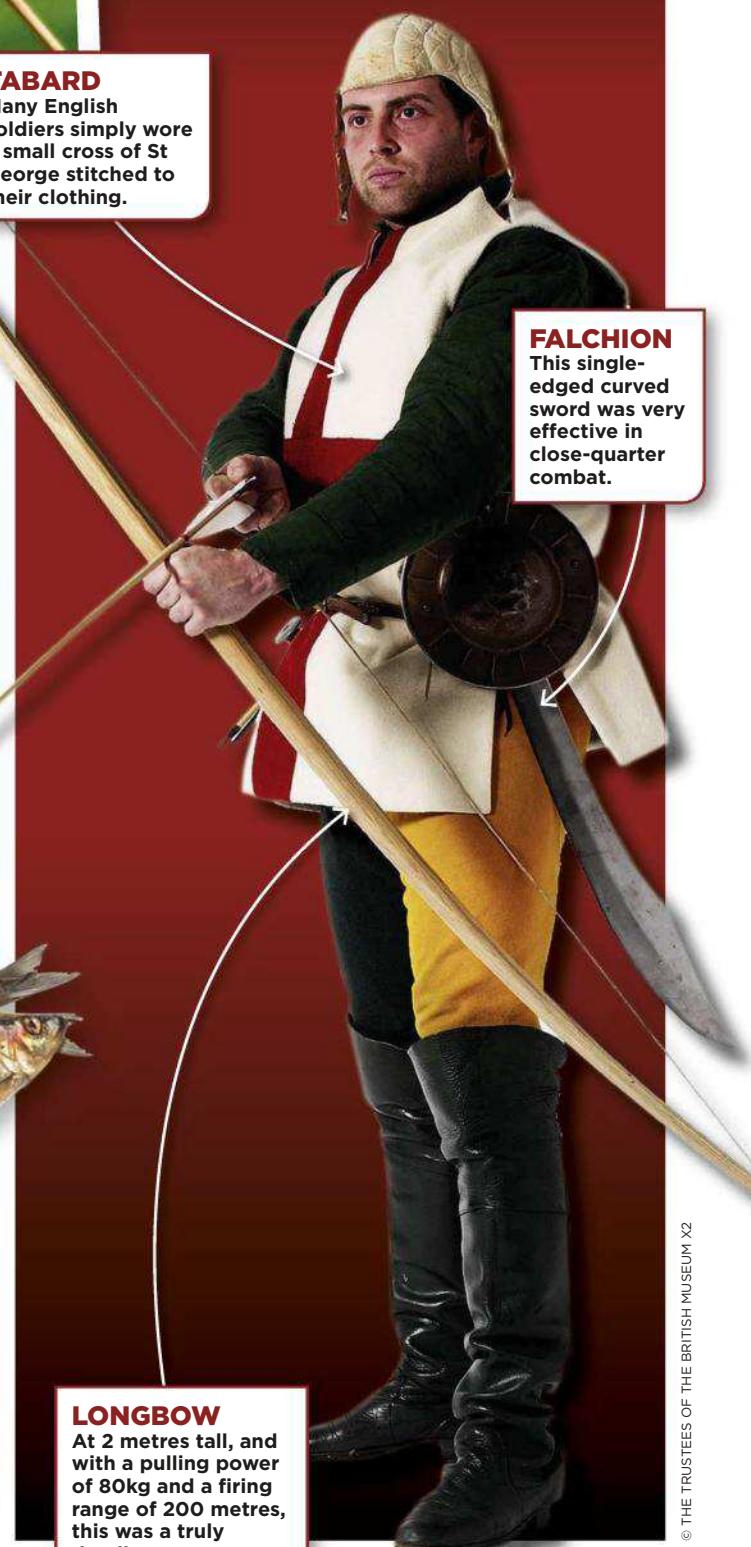
## PROVISIONS

Soldiers ate mutton, pork, beef, beans, oats, cheese and bread, and drank ale or beer. Much of the meat was salted to preserve it. Fish was frequently eaten, especially at Lent, and again was often salted. Soldiers were expected to buy their own food out of their daily pay, normally from a market place set up in camp. If rations were provided, the soldiers were paid less. Supplies were literally carted about – hundreds of wagons accompanied the army on campaign, carrying not just food but also arrows and equipment.



## PLUNDER

English plundering was commonplace at first, especially during chevauchées (see page 59). Soldiers were meant to hand in their loot, but they invariably kept it. As Henry V claimed to be recovering lands that were rightly his, he took a harder line on plundering, forbidding it outright. He had at least one soldier, who stole from a church on the march to Agincourt, hanged.



**FALCHION**  
This single-edged curved sword was very effective in close-quarter combat.

**LONGBOW**  
At 2 metres tall, and with a pulling power of 80kg and a firing range of 200 metres, this was a truly deadly weapon.

# TIMELINE

# The epic fight

Plot the course of the 116-year war, from the very first land disputes to the

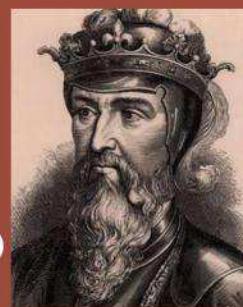
**1337-39**

Philip VI seeks to confiscate the English-held Duchy of Guyenne. England's Flemish trading partners ask for help against France.



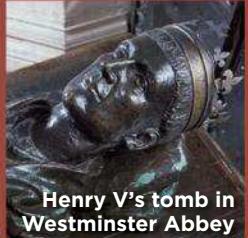
**1346**

The English defeat the French at Crécy. France's Scottish ally, David II, invades England but is defeated and captured at Neville's Cross, Durham.



**1424**

John, Duke of Bedford, defeats French and Scottish forces at Verneuil. English conquests in France continue.



**1422**

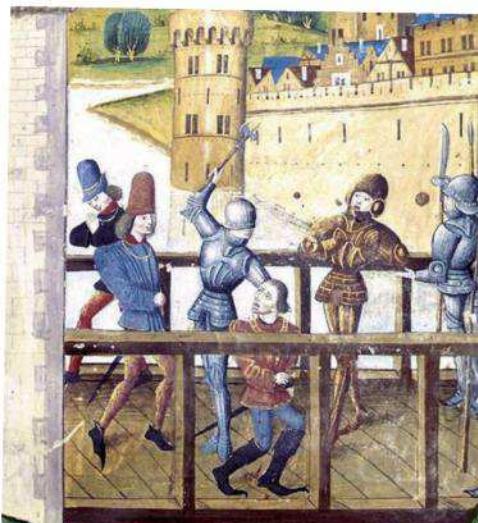
Both Henry V and Charles VI die, leaving the infant Henry VI as King of England and, in the eyes of the English and Burgundians, France.

**1420**

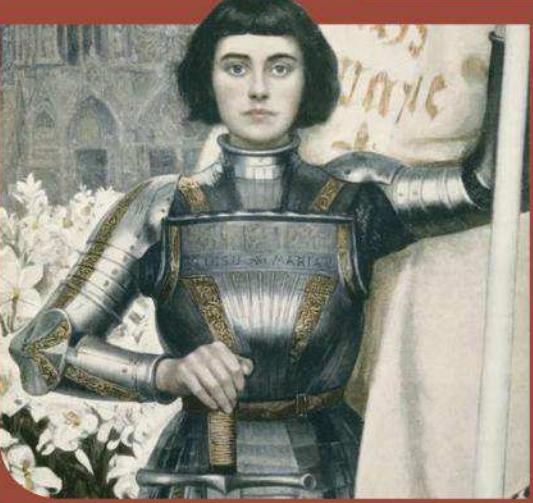
The Treaty of Troyes is signed. It is agreed that Henry V and his heirs will inherit the French throne on the death of Charles VI. Henry marries Charles's daughter, Catherine of Valois.

**1417-19**

The English conquer all of Normandy. Following the murder of his father by the Armagnacs, Philip of Burgundy allies himself with the English.



John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, is assassinated during peace talks



**1429**

Inspired by Joan of Arc, the French defeat the English at Orléans. Joan has Charles VI's son, the Dauphin, crowned King Charles VII at Reims.

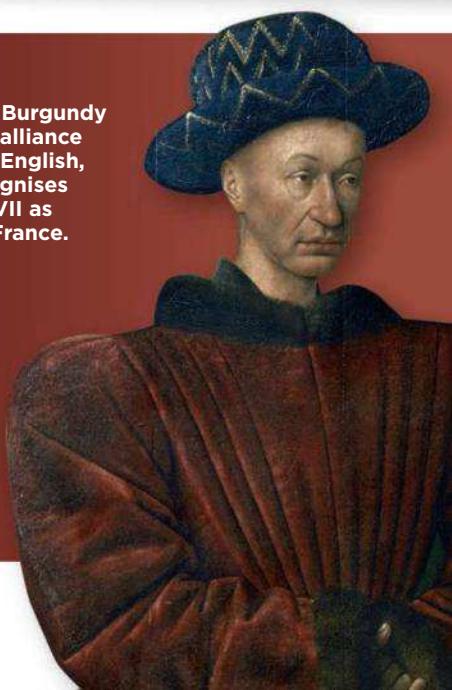
**1431**

Henry VI is crowned King of France in Paris. After being captured, Joan of Arc is burned at the stake by the English at Rouen.



**1435**

Philip of Burgundy ends his alliance with the English, and recognises Charles VII as King of France.



# for France

final French victory



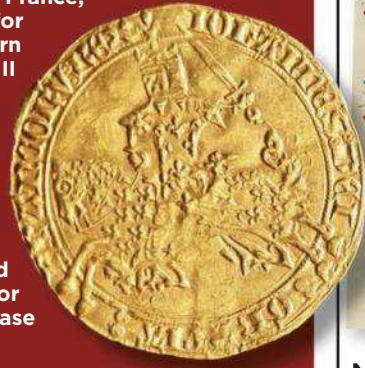
**1356**

The Black Prince defeats the French at the Battle of Poitiers and captures John II, aka, John the Good.

**1360**

The Treaty of Bretigny is signed. Edward III agrees to renounce his claim to the throne of France, in exchange for land in western France. John II is freed on payment of a huge ransom.

One of the many gold coins issued to pay for John II's release

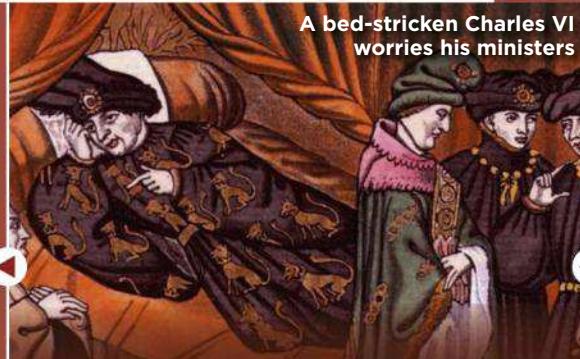


## NATIVE TONGUE

Geoffrey Chaucer embraced the language of the people, writing *The Canterbury Tales* in Middle English

**1415**

Henry V resumes war against France and captures the northern town of Harfleur. His small army is attacked by the French en route to Calais, but wins a crushing victory at Agincourt.



A bed-stricken Charles VI worries his ministers

**1413**

Henry V becomes King of England. His opposing monarch, Charles VI of France, is mentally unstable and France is split apart by a bitter civil war between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs.

**1369**

King Charles V – or Charles the Wise – of France declares war on England. Over the next 20 years, the French steadily recapture much of their lost territory.

## LIFE IN ENGLAND

### BACK HOME

Though France made a few raids on the south coast, this was largely a peaceful time in England. But it wasn't all rosy...

Soon after the start of the war, in 1348, an outbreak of the Black Death rocked Europe. A thousand English villages disappeared as, en masse, people died or fled the terrifying plague.

Culturally, English became the dominant language, succeeding varieties of French brought over during the Norman invasion of 1066. Geoffrey Chaucer (c1342-1400), wrote many of his most important poems in the vernacular, and Henry V also adopted English as his primary language.

During the long infancy reign of Henry VI, the country was ruled by a regency council. Although this proved effective at the time, it did breed a certain amount of turmoil, and the seeds of the Wars of the Roses were sown. Just two years after the conflict in France ended, the houses of York and Lancaster were at war in England.

**1444**

The Treaty of Tours is signed. The hard-pressed English secure a truce with France. Henry VI is married to Margaret of Anjou, and five years of fragile peace follow.

**1449-50**

War resumes after the English break the truce. The French overrun Normandy and defeat the English at Formigny.



**1453**

The Earl of Shrewsbury attempts to recapture Gascony but is defeated and killed at Castillon. The English still hold Calais and claim the French throne but the war is effectively over.



### HEAVEN SENT

Considered a heroine in France since driving the English from the Loire, Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orléans, wasn't canonised until 1920 – nearly **500 years** after her execution.

# THE MAID OF ORLÉANS

# Joan of Arc

In March 1429, a 17-year-old girl arrived at Charles VII's court at Chinon. She announced that she had been called upon by saints to expel the English and restore the throne of France.

That girl was Joan of Arc...



## THE SAINT GOES MARCHING IN

Milla Jovovich strikes a warrior pose as the lead in *The Messenger: the Story of Joan of Arc* (1999)

ALAMY

Joan, or Jeanne d'Arc as she's known in her native land, was the daughter of a tenant farmer from Domrémy, in north-eastern France. She had begun to hear saintly voices at the age of 13, upon which she took a vow of chastity and resisted her father's attempts to marry her off. In 1428, after England's Burgundian allies had burned her village, an impassioned Joan had made her way to Vaucouleurs. There, she sought out Robert de Baudricourt, a French commander and supporter of Charles VII, the Dauphin. She asked him for an escort to Charles's court in Chinon. She believed she could raise the Siege of Orléans, at the time under English attack. Baudricourt was unimpressed, and told her uncle to take her home and give her a good beating. But the tenacious Joan could not be swept aside so easily. She persisted, returning to Vaucouleurs the following January. Eventually, Baudricourt gave in to her appeals. Dressed in male clothing, she and her supporters set off, travelling by night to avoid enemy soldiers.

When she arrived she was brought into the castle's great hall, where she immediately picked out the Dauphin, Charles, from the crowd. Joan promised Charles she would see him crowned King at Reims – the traditional French site for coronations – and asked him to let her lead an

army to Orléans. After much discussion with his counsellors, Charles agreed. At the end of April 1429, riding in armour given to her by the Dauphin and carrying a white standard which depicted Christ in judgement, she set off for Orléans. Behind her marched an armed convoy with supplies for the besieged city.

### UNDER SIEGE

Orléans had been under siege since October 1428. One of the largest towns in France, it stood on the north bank of the Loire and was enclosed

and, so it is said, hot oil, which the women of Orléans had prepared to pour down on the attackers. But the English kept up the pressure and, three days later, the French pulled back, abandoning the Tourelles stronghold.

If Salisbury thought this was a precursor to a quick victory, he was mistaken. Gaucourt's engineers had been undermining the bridge and, once the defenders were back in the city, he demolished the last two arches. Rather than withdraw, Salisbury dug in for a lengthy siege. He set up headquarters in the Tourelles, strengthening it with a massive earthwork.

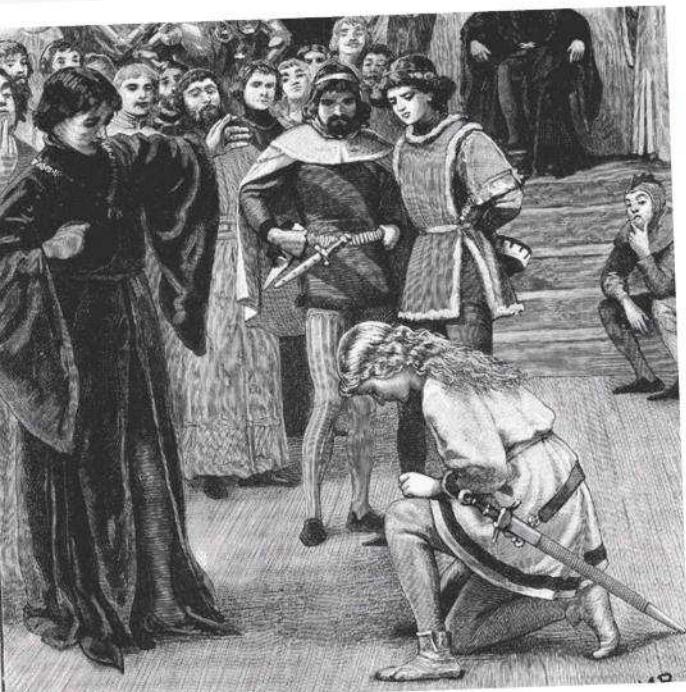
Salisbury trained his artillery on the city walls but the defenders had guns too and, on 27 October, he was looking out of one of the Tourelles' windows when it was hit by a stone cannonball fired from the city. The resulting debris tore off his lower jaw and he died in agony a week later. His place as commander was taken by William, Earl of Suffolk. The next three months saw both sides attempt to strengthen their positions. The English didn't have enough men to surround Orléans completely, so had to make do by building a series of small forts and earthworks to control the approaches to the town. Even so, 1,400 French reinforcements managed to get through, under the command of Jean, the illegitimate son of Louis, Duke of Orléans. Jean took over command inside the blockaded city.

On 12 February, a convoy of 300 wagons carrying supplies for the English besiegers was attacked by the French and their Scottish allies. John Fastolf, the English commander,

## WHEN JOAN RODE INTO THE BESIEGED CITY, SHE WAS WELCOMED AS A HERO BY ITS POPULATION

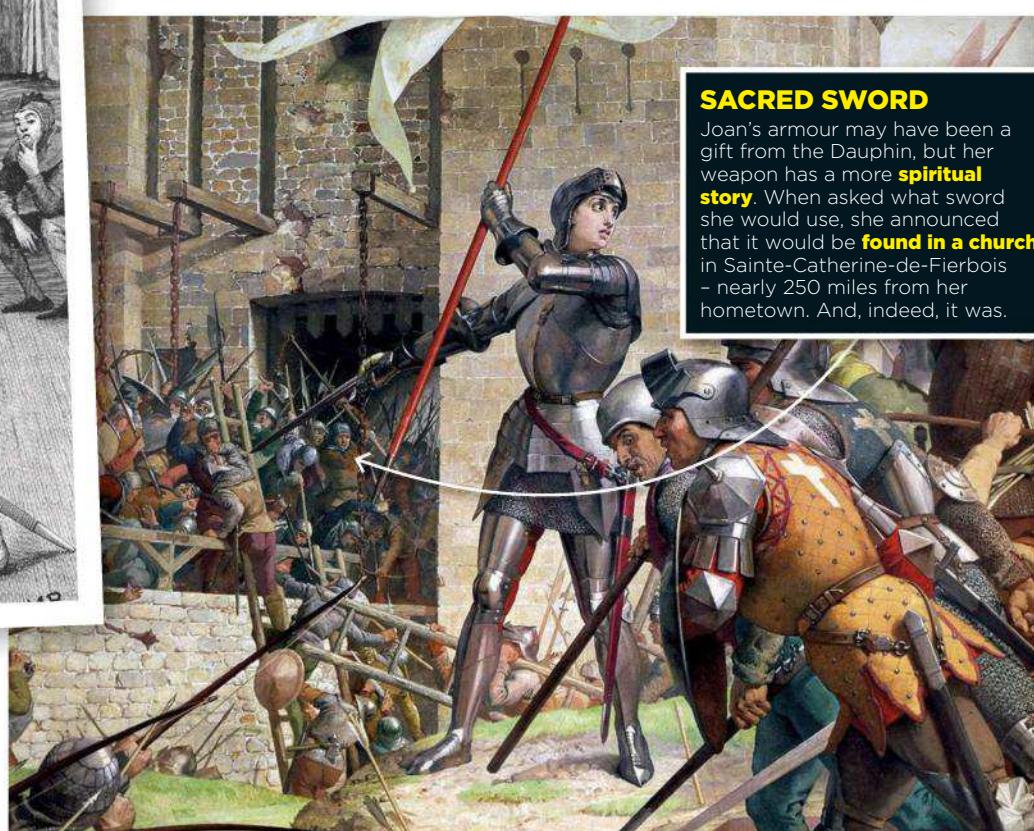
by walls, with eight fortified gates. On the south side of the river, linked to the main town by a long stone bridge, stood a small fortress called the Tourelles. In charge of the city's defence was Raoul de Gaucourt, an old enemy of the English who had spent ten years as their prisoner, after being captured at Harfleur back in 1415.

On 12 October, the English commander, the Earl of Salisbury, began his attack on the city. Nine days later, seeking to capture the bridge into Orléans, the English tried to storm the Tourelles but were driven back by showers of boiling water, burning coals



### ON A MISSION

ABOVE: The peasant Joan meets King Charles VII, the Dauphin, at his court in 1429  
RIGHT: Joan, now a military leader, rallies the troops to free Orléans from its besiegement



### SACRED SWORD

Joan's armour may have been a gift from the Dauphin, but her weapon has a more **spiritual story**. When asked what sword she would use, she announced that it would be **found in a church** in Sainte-Catherine-de-Fierbois – nearly 250 miles from her hometown. And, indeed, it was.



### TRIUMPH TO DISASTER

ABOVE: Brandishing her banner, Joan stands next to Charles VII as he is crowned King of France  
LEFT: Captured by the Burgundians, the Maid of Orléans is now in the hands of the enemy

fought off the enemy and eventually drove them from the field. The convoy's supplies included cannonballs, arrows and crossbow bolts, as well as, more importantly, herrings - Lent was approaching, and the soldiers would have been forbidden from eating meat. As a result, this skirmish was called the Battle of the Herrings.

### FRESH HEART

At the end of April, Joan's convoy arrived at Orléans. Instead of immediately attacking the English as she'd hoped, the military commanders of her convoy insisted on delaying battle, loading the supplies onto boats and sailing them into Orléans. Nevertheless, when she rode into the sieged city, she was welcomed as a hero by its population, who thronged the streets to cheer her.

Joan was thirsty for action, but had to content herself with shouting insults at the English who enthusiastically responded, calling her 'witch', 'whore' and 'cowherd'. Finally, on 4 May, Joan got her wish, as a second French relief force got through to Orléans. Now an attack could be launched against the English fort to the east of the city.

The battle started badly, but Joan's appearance put fresh heart in the French. The fort was taken, and its 150 defenders killed or captured. The French followed up this success by building a pontoon bridge across the Loire River, and taking the Tourelles. The fighting there was particularly heavy - even Joan was wounded by an arrow, as she placed a scaling ladder up against the ramparts. The loss of the Tourelles was a severe blow to the English, who



## SAINT, SINNER AND SIREN JOAN'S LEGACY

*The French heroine has inspired centuries of artists...*

### "CORRUPT AND TAINTED"

One of the earliest dramatic depictions of Joan comes courtesy of the Bard, in *Henry VI part one*. Written for an English audience, Shakespeare depicts her as a dangerous character, and she falls from grace and virtue to fear and dishonour.



Shakespeare's Joan is a vilified version

### INTO POLITICS

Few women are more revered in France than Joan. In almost every town, there are streets in her name and statues in her honour. In the early 19th century - when Napoleon ruled - her legend was revived, and she became a key political symbol.



Joan's statue stands proud in Paris

### SCREEN ICON

In the 20th century, Joan found herself on the silver screen. Before long, that meant a sultry makeover. In 1948, Ingrid Bergman - off the back of starring in one of Hitchcock's most erotic films, *Notorious* - took the title role in *Joan of Arc*.



Ingrid Bergman as the innocent peasant

# THE SIEGE OF ORLÉANS

## Joan of Arc leads the French fight back

The English began their Siege of Orléans in October 1428. By the following April, the French defenders were on the brink of surrender. But, in the nick of time, a relief force led by Joan of Arc arrived, bringing much-needed supplies and reinforcements. The French then launched a counter-attack, capturing some of the forts the English had built around the city and, on 8 May 1429, the English abandoned the siege. While conflict would continue for nearly a quarter of a century, the French victory at Orléans marked a turning point in the Hundred Years War.

### DEFENCE OF Orléans

The Loire River, high walls and watchtowers made the city a tough nut to crack



#### 1. RUINS

Demolished buildings – these are destroyed to reduce cover for the English.

#### 2. LE CHÂTELET

Main citadel – a ballista on the battlements commands the bridge.

#### 3. CATHEDRAL

Sainte Croix Cathedral – Joan of Arc hears mass here shortly after arriving in the city.

#### 4. BURGUNDY GATE

French reinforcements slip past the English to arrive here on 4 May.

#### 5. BRIDGE

The bridge across the river is partly demolished by defenders.

#### 6. SIEGEWORKS

St Augustine monastery and the Tourelles fort – both are captured and fortified by the English.



### SIEGE TACTICS

## THE BASICS

To capture a town or castle you could persuade or scare the defenders into surrender, scale the walls, undermine the defences or batter them down with artillery. Although these weapons (right) were effective tools, often the most effective way to win a siege was to settle down and starve the defenders into submission.

### THE TOURELLES

On 7-8 May 1429, the French take back this fortress. It has been the main English fortification on the south side of Orléans.

### JOAN'S STANDARD

The banner is now carried by one of Joan's followers, as she was wounded early in the battle.

### KEYHOLE GUNPORTS

These holes allow cannons to be shot out from the fort.

### ARCHERS

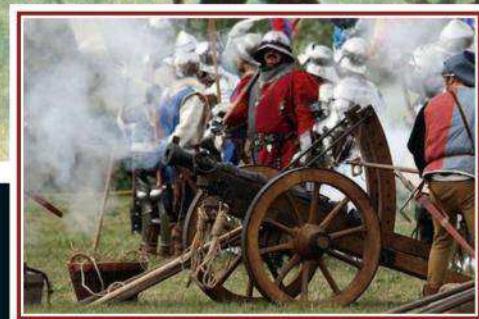
French archers shoot arrows to keep the English defenders' heads down.

### SCALING LADDER

A direct-but-dangerous way of attacking a castle or city.

### IN DEFENCE

An English defender wears the cross of St George as he faces the French.



### CANNONS

Artillery grew in importance as the war progressed. Guns and cannons fired stone or iron balls, sometimes aimed at walls, sometimes shot into the town behind the walls to demoralise the defenders.

### LONGBOWS

The longbow was the traditional weapon of the English, although it was also used by their French and Scottish enemies. Joan of Arc was wounded in the shoulder by an arrow during the attack on the Tourelles.



### CROSSBOW

The range and power of this weapon makes it useful in long drawn-out sieges, when it is less important to shoot rapidly.



## SHE PUBLICLY RENOUNCED HER “CRIMES AND ERRORS”, DENYING THAT SHE HAD EVER RECEIVED DIVINE GUIDANCE...

she suffered defeat at La Charite. Joan now began to find herself increasingly sidelined. In May 1430, she took it upon herself to lead a relief force to the town of Compiègne, which was being besieged by the Burgundians. She led a sortie out of the gates but was cut off and captured by the Burgundians who later transferred her to English custody for a payment of 10,000 francs.

### HOLY HERETIC

The prime mover in her subsequent trial in Rouen was Pierre Cauchon, the Bishop of Beauvais, who was a strong supporter of both the Burgundian faction in France and the English. Cauchon probably saw in Joan's claims of divine inspiration a threat – the Church was the only conduit between man and God. What's more, her choice to wear men's clothing went in clear defiance of the Church's teachings of the time. But there was more to it than that. If Joan

could be convicted of heresy it would discredit Charles, who owed his coronation to her. In the trial that followed, Joan faced charges including witchcraft, heresy and dressing like a man. Wanting to distance himself from an accused heretic, Charles did nothing to save her.

Joan vigorously argued her case but, in May 1431, after a year in captivity, she publicly renounced her “crimes and errors”, denying that she had ever received divine guidance and admitting her guilt in wearing men's clothes, shedding blood and invoking evil spirits. Cauchon had achieved his objective of discrediting

both her and her king, but two days later she claimed she had heard voices again, donned men's clothes and said that her recantation had been motivated by the fear of death. On the morning of 30 May, Joan was taken to the old market place of Rouen, placed at the stake, and burned to death. ◎

70

The number of charges that Joan faced when placed on trial by the English



**EXPERT VIEW**  
History Professor and Author, **Anne Curry**

## OUR NEAREST NEIGHBOURS HAVE ALSO BEEN OUR GREATEST RIVALS

### Why does this war still interest us?

The English always seem to have had a love-hate relationship with the French. We may like to holiday there now, but the fact remains that, historically, our nearest neighbours have also been our greatest rivals. And never was that rivalry more intense and dramatic than during the Hundred Years War. Add to that a cast of memorable characters like the Black Prince, Henry V and Joan of Arc, and it's hardly surprising the wars continue to capture the popular imagination.

### Did England ever have a realistic chance of conquering all of France?

Without allies, no. In fact, total conquest wasn't on the agenda at the time. The war was more a short, sharp shock to renegotiate tenure of England's possessions in France. Henry V was more successful than Edward III because 15th-century France was divided and an alliance was possible with the Burgundians. Once that alliance ended, the outlook was bleak.

### What effect did the wars have on England as a nation?

It's often claimed that they helped develop a sense of national identity, and royal propaganda certainly sought to heighten a sense of ‘Englishness’ to harness support for the wars. Perhaps the most significant effect was the development of a fiscal state. Wars had to be paid for through taxes, Parliament was needed to raise them and gained in importance as a result.

Anne Curry is Professor of History and Dean of Humanities at the University of Southampton. She is co-author of *The Soldier in Later Medieval England* (OUP, 2013) and author of *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations* (Boydell, 2009). From 31 July – 3 August 2015, the University of Southampton is hosting a conference to mark the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt.

# GET HOOKED!

Continue your journey into the world of medieval warfare – check out these museums, books, films and more, all about the Hundred Years War

## MUSEUMS AND MONUMENTS

Come face to face with battle sites and medieval arms...



### ▲ NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ARMS AND ARMOUR, LEEDS

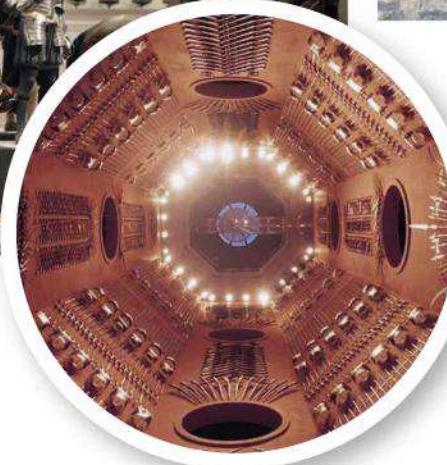
See a Hundred Years War knight's garb at The Royal Armouries in Leeds.  
[www.royalarmouries.org](http://www.royalarmouries.org)

Leeds has one of the best collections of medieval arms and armour in the world



### ◀ SOUTHAMPTON, HAMPSHIRE

Many of the city's walls were built following a French raid at the start of the war. They have some of the UK's earliest gunports. [www.discover-southampton.co.uk](http://www.discover-southampton.co.uk)



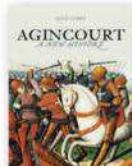
### ► BATTLEFIELD MUSEUMS, FRANCE

The battlefields of Crécy and Agincourt both have museums and are only an hour's drive from Calais. [www.crecymuseum.wordpress.com](http://www.crecymuseum.wordpress.com) and [www.agincourt1415.fr](http://www.agincourt1415.fr)



## BOOKS

The horror and the glory of the Hundred Years War in paperback, from battle analysis to gruesome weapons...



### AGINCOURT: A NEW HISTORY

by Anne Curry

An in-depth study of one of England's most famous battles, which tells the facts from the fallacies.



### CONQUEST: THE ENGLISH KINGDOM OF FRANCE

by Juliet Barker

A gripping account of the rise and fall of England's French lands during the Hundred Years War.



### THE GREAT WARBOW

by Robert Hardy and Matthew Strickland

Everything you need to know about this deadly weapon: how it was made and used, and the battles won with it.

## ON SCREEN

Immerse yourself in the conquests and the crushes...



### HENRY V (1989)

Kenneth Branagh's gritty screen adaptation of Shakespeare's classic play has won worldwide critical acclaim, plus a few awards.



### THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC (1928)

Considered to be one of the world's great films, this silent movie focuses on the trial and death of the peasant-turned-soldier.

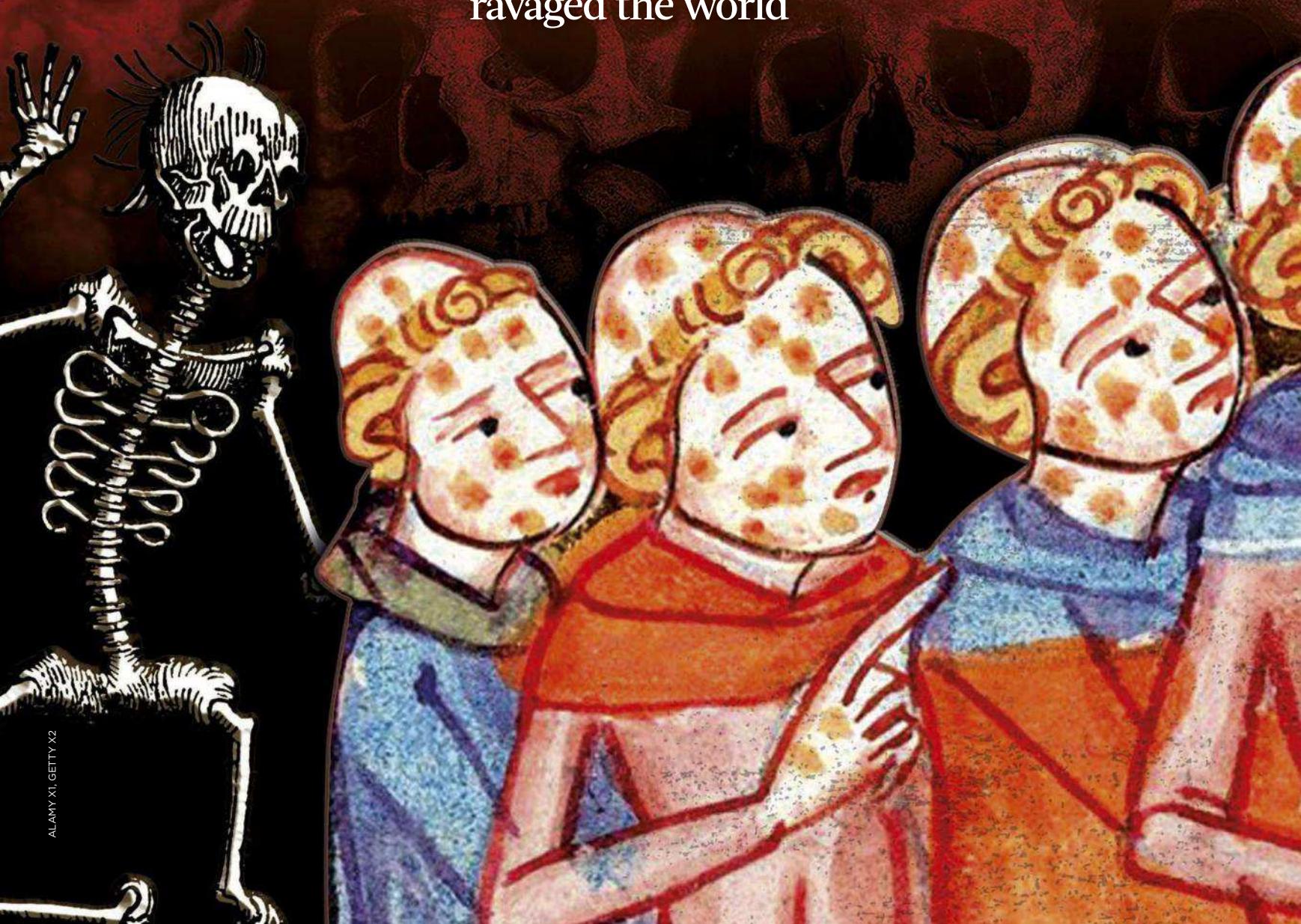
### THE SOLDIER IN LATER MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

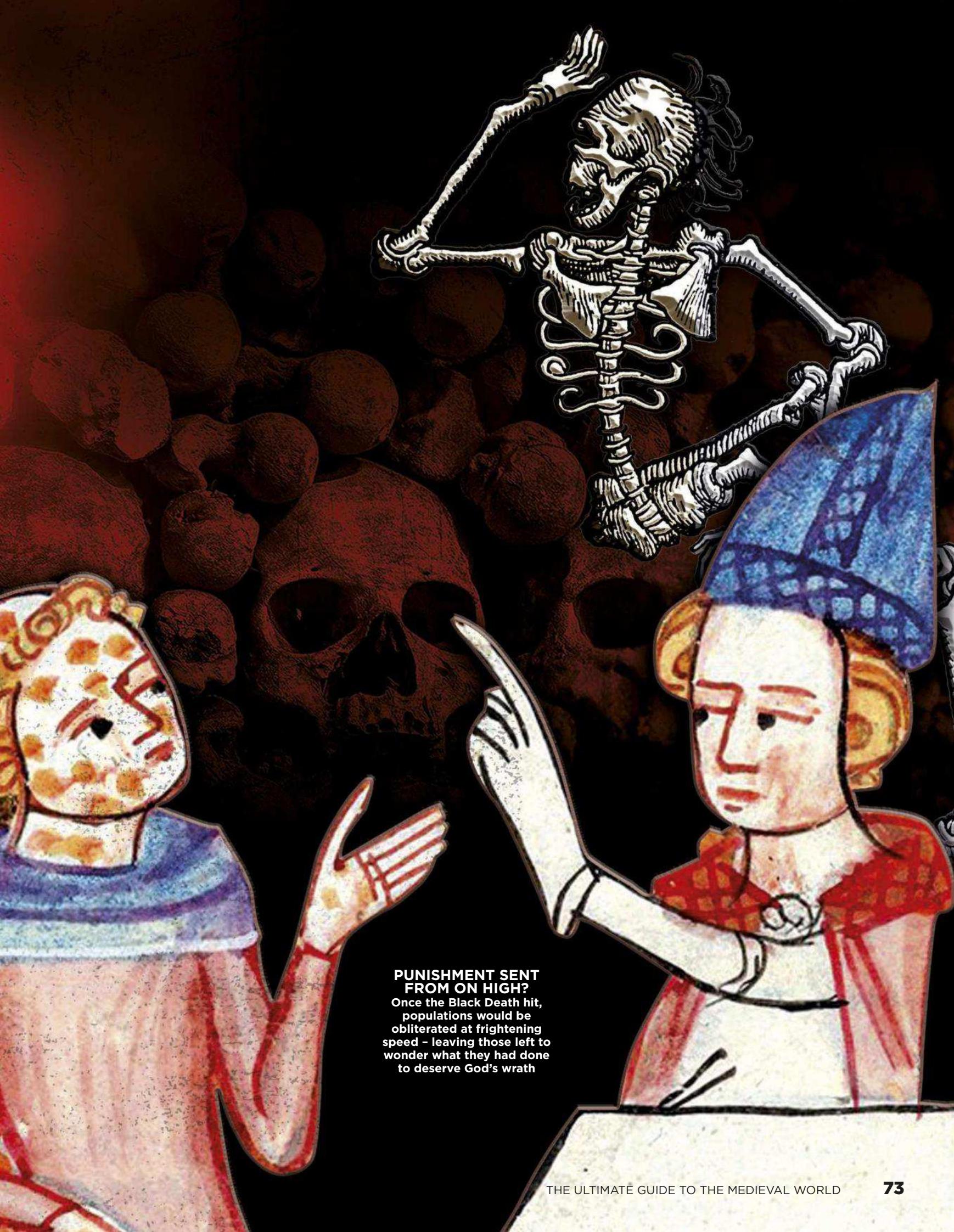
An extraordinary online database with searchable details of thousands of English soldiers who fought in the Hundred Years War. Will your name, or an ancestors', be on it? [www.medievallsoldier.org](http://www.medievallsoldier.org)

# THE BLACK DEATH

It left millions dead, communities ripped apart  
and survivors learning to live with death.

Discover how the terrible pestilence  
ravaged the world





### PUNISHMENT SENT FROM ON HIGH?

Once the Black Death hit, populations would be obliterated at frightening speed - leaving those left to wonder what they had done to deserve God's wrath

Boils were a sign of the Black Death and, despite various methods, doctors could do nothing for the afflicted



**T**wo ships arrived at the small Dorset port of Melcombe on a June day in 1348. For the local people, their arrival was nothing out of the ordinary. They, like many in England, had heard rumours of a terrible pestilence ravaging Europe, but that did not mean it had to concern them. Such faraway places were beyond their imagination, separated by a sea most had never journeyed across. Instead, the people of Melcombe were more interested in preparing for the Feast of St John the Baptist, one of the oldest of the Christian festivals, marked with bonfires and an open-air feast of roasted meat, bread, cheese and beer.

### STENCH OF DEATH

But when the two trading vessels, one of them registered in Bristol, docked at the Melcombe port, they contained more than just spices and wine. At least one of the sailors, a man from Gascony in the south-west of France, walked down the gangplank carrying the dreaded plague. Within two years, an estimated one-third of the 4.2 million people of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales had succumbed to what the survivors called the Black Death.

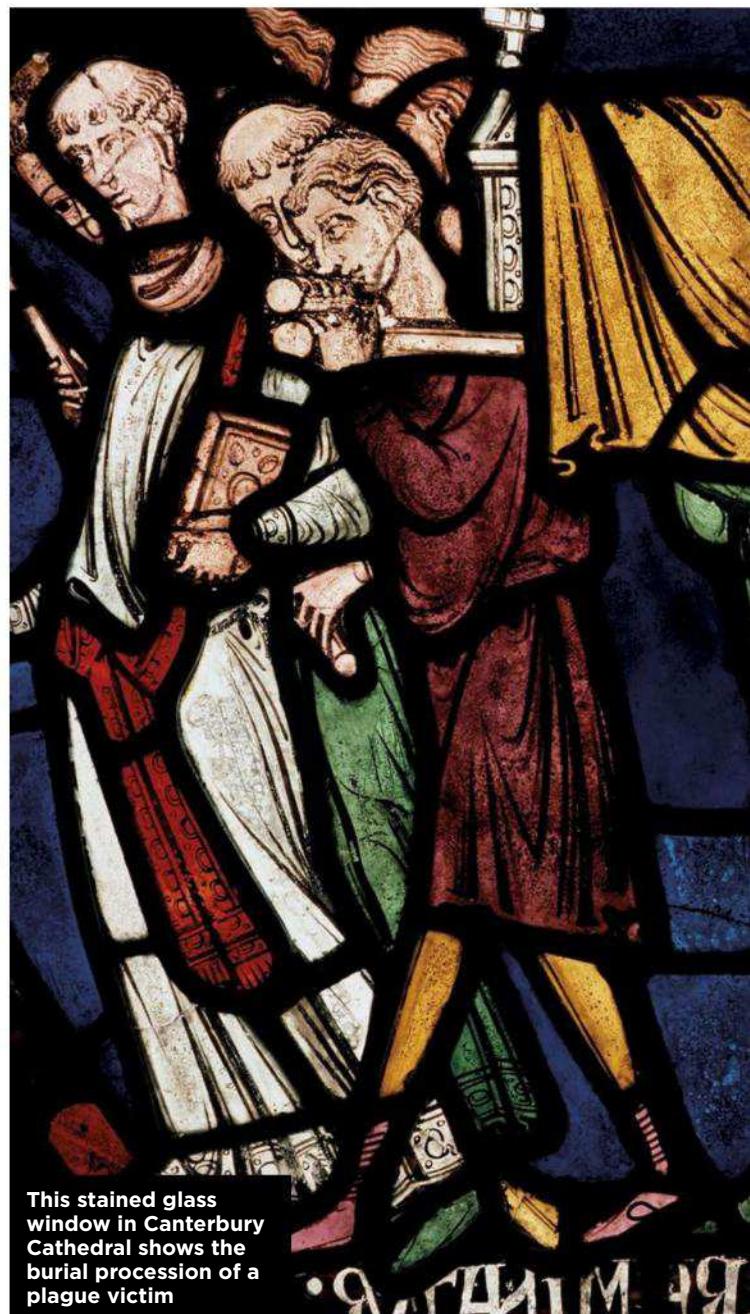
It is now believed that the mass-killer originated in the east of Kyrgyzstan, central Asia, in the late 1330s. Traders

unknowingly carried it along the Silk Road, either east into China or south towards India. As travel was slow at the time, it took time for the plague to spread initially, but once it struck it went to work quickly, killing the infected in a matter of days.

By 1346, word had reached Europe. People gossiped in markets and taverns, talking about painful boils as large as apples growing under arms and in the groins of the doomed. Then the talk went on to how the boils would turn black and the stench they emitted. The stench of imminent death.

Those in the midst of the suffering looked for someone to blame. In Crimea, where 85,000 people died in 1346, the Tartars pointed an accusing finger at the Christian merchants from Genoa. They besieged the Christians in their trading post on the coastal town of Kaffa and resorted to biological warfare, firing plague-riddled corpses over the walls with giant catapults. The Christians fled aboard their galleys, sailing across the (appropriately named) Black Sea into the Mediterranean. With them went the plague.

Sicily in 1347 was the first port of call for the Black Death in Europe. From there, the disease



This stained glass window in Canterbury Cathedral shows the burial procession of a plague victim

entered Italy, killing thousands and leaving millions asking God what they had done to deserve his wrath. A punishment for the sins of humankind was the common conclusion. The less-educated believed that God's fury had corrupted the atmosphere, sending an evil mist across the ocean. The more learned, such as the Medical Faculty of the University of Paris, published a paper at the instruction of King Philip VI, which claimed that a misalignment of the planets was the cause.

The paper would be published in 1348, by which time the tentacles of the Black Death had reached out across France. The killer sickness had

### DID YOU KNOW?

Among the scapegoats blamed, and often killed, for the Black Death were Jews, women suspected of witchcraft and cats (because of their association with sorcery). Ironically, the absence of cats prevented a check on the rat population.



**"If any city should have been spared, it was Avignon, but some 62,000 died"**

entered through the Mediterranean port of Marseille in September 1347, killing 56,000 of the city's inhabitants in four weeks. People were soon dropping dead along the coast in Montpellier, with one doctor noting: "Instantaneous death occurs when the aerial spirit escaping from the eyes of the sick man strikes the eyes of a healthy person standing near and looking at the sick."

The same abrupt, brutal, undignified death ravaged the cities of Carcassonne, Toulouse and Bordeaux. France then trembled at the fate of Avignon. The city had been the papal capital since 1309, the successor to Rome as the residency

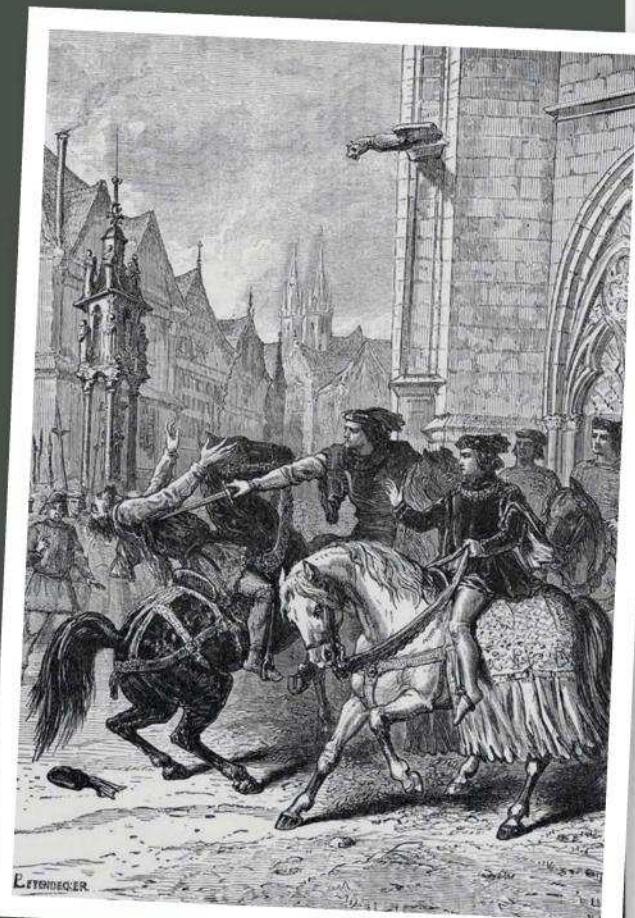
of the pope. If any city should have been spared, it was Avignon but that was not to be. Some 62,000 died in three months. So great was God's fury that not even canons and bishops escaped excruciating death.

The plague first reached Paris in the late spring of 1348 but it wasn't until the end of the year that the French capital felt its full destructive force. Around a quarter of the city's population of 200,000 died as the Black Death continued its journey north, through Amiens, Lille and up to the coast. "It is almost impossible to credit the mortality throughout the whole country," wrote

## How the plague became revolting

Historians may differ on the extent to which the Black Death influenced the Peasants Revolt of 1381, but none dispute that it played a part in sparking the uprising. With one third of England's population killed by the plague, the survivors were in a strong position economically, able to demand higher wages and better working conditions from their masters. Those employers who refused would soon discover that their peasants had slipped away to offer their services to a more munificent lord of the manor. While the profits of landowners diminished, the purchasing power of rural workers increased by as much as 40 per cent in the following decades.

The authorities reacted by introducing clumsy legislation in an attempt to curtail the growing power of the peasants, which caused simmering resentment. But it was the imposition in 1377 of a poll tax to pay for the spiralling costs of the Hundred Years' War with France that ultimately led to the six-month revolt of 1381. London witnessed the brunt of the violence, although there was unrest across England before the king's troops quashed the rebellion. It had resulted in around 1,500 deaths. The hated poll tax, however, was scrapped.



Leader Wat Tyler is wounded as the Peasant's Revolt fails, but lives long enough to be beheaded

Death rides through the people in this haunting fresco

**"Like an invading army, the plague moved inland... the first major city struck down was Bristol"**

Italian poet Boccaccio's description of the plague in Florence, which killed half the population, inspired this engraving

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The only ruling monarch to die of the Black Death was King Alfonso XI of Castile in Spain – although the King of England Edward III did lose his daughter, Princess Joan.

one man, Gilles Li Muisis. "Travellers, merchants, pilgrims and others who have passed through it declare that they have found cattle wandering without herdsmen in the fields, towns and waste lands; that they have seen barns and wine-cellars standing wide open, houses empty and few people to be found anywhere."

By June 1348, England had come to understand that something was wreaking havoc across the sea that separated them from the rest of the world. Hearsay travelled great distances, as second-hand stories passed from one merchant to another. Yet precise details remained scarce. No one knew, for example, that 100,000 people had died in Florence or that half of the population of Orvieto was now in the earth.

## ON THE DECLINE

The English weren't that worried, though. Possessed of a more phlegmatic and less superstitious temperament than Latin Europe, they believed themselves innately superior to the continent. Victory over the French at the Battle of Crécy in 1346 had led to the seizure of Calais the following year and yet the confidence was illusory.

Europe had been on the decline for decades, with the effects being felt even in England. Perhaps not as severely as in



Italy, France or Spain, but nonetheless the economy stagnated and people became more indigent than they had been for years. This was in marked contrast to the previous two centuries, a period of relative calm in western Europe, in which work replaced war as the main occupation for young men. The continent enjoyed an economic boom and the population rocketed, but in the second-half of the 13th century, the good times came to an end. A change in climate devastated harvests, the heavy rain and plummeting temperatures continuing into the following century. There was no longer enough food for the over-crowded continent and the poor starved as the recession tightened its grip.

While England wasn't as fragile as some of its European neighbours, the gap between the rich and the poor nonetheless widened. An increasing number of the down-and-out moved to towns and cities in search of work, which only added to the overcrowding in the three biggest cities in the country, London, Norwich and York.

Exactly what day the Black Death came to the British Isles isn't recorded, neither is the name of the sailor nor his ship, but it arrived and soon, like an invading army, the plague moved inland from its landing zone in Melcombe. The first major city struck down was Bristol. "There died, suddenly overwhelmed by death, almost the whole strength of the town," recorded the 14th-century English chronicler, Henry Knighton. "Few were sick more than three days, or two days, or even half a day."

Knighton may have exaggerated, but Bristol lost around 40 per cent of its 10,000 inhabitants and then, in search of fresh victims, the Black Death turned east, towards Gloucester. Forewarned about the devastation that had befallen Bristol, the town council

# BLACK DEATH FACTS



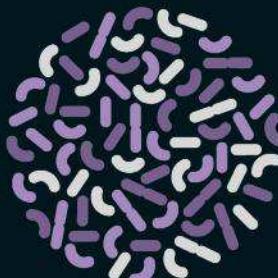
No precise records were kept of how the Black Death affected Ireland, but one chronicler stated that 14,000 people died in Dublin between 8 August and 25 December 1349



It is estimated that one third of all Scots died from the plague



In 2013, construction workers digging tunnels for London's Crossrail train unearthed 25 skeletons under Charterhouse Square in Clerkenwell. Subsequent DNA revealed evidence of the bacterium that caused Black Death



Given the right temperatures, the bacteria that causes the plagues can 'hibernate' for up to 6 months



One written report claimed that it was believed those who cleared sewage were immune as their bodies were used to toxic atmospheres



Few people recover from pneumonic plague, with death 95–100% certain within 72 hours



For a bubonic plague epidemic to erupt, the temperature must be between 15–20°C, with a humidity of 90–95%. A humidity of under 70% kills the plague



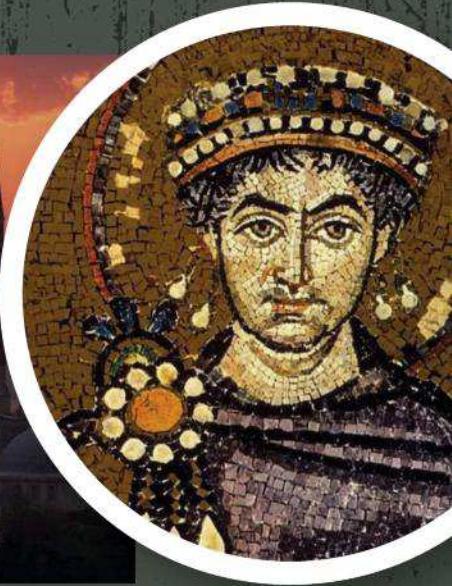
The plague arrived in Scandinavia from England and Magnus IV of Sweden issued a declaration to his subjects advising them to walk to church in bare feet to avoid the plague. It didn't help

# TOP OF THE POX

If only the Black Death was the sole example of the world falling prey to the ravages of a mass-killer pestilence. In fact, the disease death-toll over the centuries has been devastating

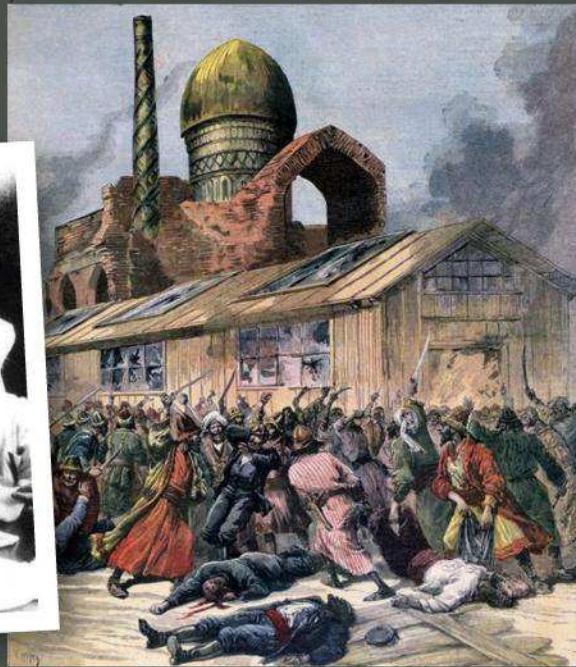
## PLAQUE OF JUSTINIAN (AD 541–542)

► The terrible twin of the Black Death, the Justinian plague swept across the world in the sixth century, killing an estimated 30 to 50 million people in Asia, Africa and Europe. Scientists recently confirmed the two pandemics were caused by the same bacterium, *Yersinia pestis*.



## SPANISH INFLUENZA (1918–20)

▼ The influenza pandemic of a century ago ravaged a world already enfeebled by four years of war. Dubbed 'Spanish Flu' because that country's media was the first to report it in detail, the virus was unusually aggressive and claimed tens of millions of victims among World War I soldiers and civilians alike.



## THE ANTONINE PLAGUE (AD 165–180)

► Brought into the Roman Empire by soldiers returning from military campaign in the Near East, the plague killed an estimated five million, a mortality rate of 30 per cent. Although there is no conclusive proof, it's believed the disease was smallpox.



## THE GREAT PLAGUE OF LONDON (1665–66)

► Overcrowding and poor sanitation contributed to the outbreak of bubonic plague in the spring of 1665. An estimated 100,000 Londoners died, 15 per cent of the city's population, with the flea-carrying black rats only defeated by the Great Fire the following year.





ABOVE: The people of Tournai bury the dead in a mass grave  
TOP RIGHT: This iron cross was placed on the grave of a monk who fell victim to the Black Death  
BOTTOM RIGHT: Devices like this gold and silver pomander were filled with fragrant-smelling petals or herbs to keep the owner safe from foul air

closed the gates to outsiders. Yet this applied to human outsiders. Black rats could still scurry along the banks of the Severn, or inside the barges, finding a way into Gloucester.

No one in England, or the rest of the world, had any inkling that rats were to blame for the spread of the plague. It is now known that 10 years earlier in central Asia, the bacterium *Yersinia pestis* entered the stomach of a flea, whose preferred host was a rodent (a marmot, jerboa or rat). The plague might never have left its little corner of remote Kyrgyzstan were it not for the large migration of rats in the late 1330s. The black rat was a tough and adventurous rodent, travelling long distances in search of food. They entered villages and towns, and the fleas infected traders, who then took the plague along the Silk Road and onto ships.

After Gloucester, it was Oxford's turn to be overrun. Many of the city's wealthier citizens had already fled to their country houses by the time the Black Death arrived. The poor, however, died in such numbers that there weren't enough healthy people to bury the bodies. Winchester was badly hit, the town of 8,000 losing roughly half of its inhabitants, so too, the Isle of Wight, while great swathes of Sussex and Kent were decimated. William Dene, a monk of Rochester, recorded that the city's bishop lost from his household four priests, five esquires, ten attendants, seven clerics and six pages. It was

representative of Rochester's suffering in general. "Men and women carried their own children on their shoulders to the church and threw them into a common pit," wrote Dene. "From these pits such an appalling stench was given that scarcely anyone dared even to walk beside the cemeteries."

#### ROOTLESS PHANTOM

From the south of England, the Black Death headed north into Lincolnshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire and then Scotland. When it crossed into Wales, the poet Jeuan Gethin captured its horror in eloquent prose – shortly before he perished in the spring of 1349. "We see death coming in our midst like black smoke, a plague which cuts off the young, a rootless phantom which has no mercy for fair countenance," he wrote.



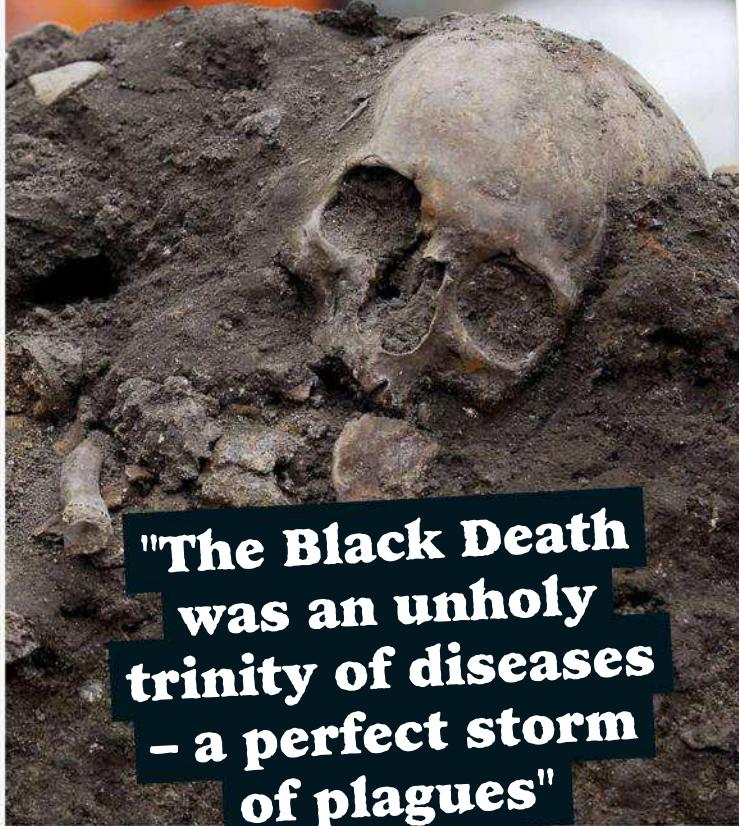
"It is seething, terrible, wherever it may come, a head that gives pain and causes a loud cry, a burden carried under the arms, a painful angry knob, a white lump. It is the form of an apple, like the head of an onion, a small boil that spares no one... it is an ugly eruption that comes with unseemly haste. They are similar to the seeds of the black peas, broken fragments of brittle sea-coal and crowds precede the end."

On being bitten by an infected flea, it took on average six days for the first dark pustule to appear on the victim. Then came the swelling of the lymph nodes as the body fought the infection, called buboes (hence 'bubonic' plague), and then the subcutaneous haemorrhaging turned the skin a vivid purple.

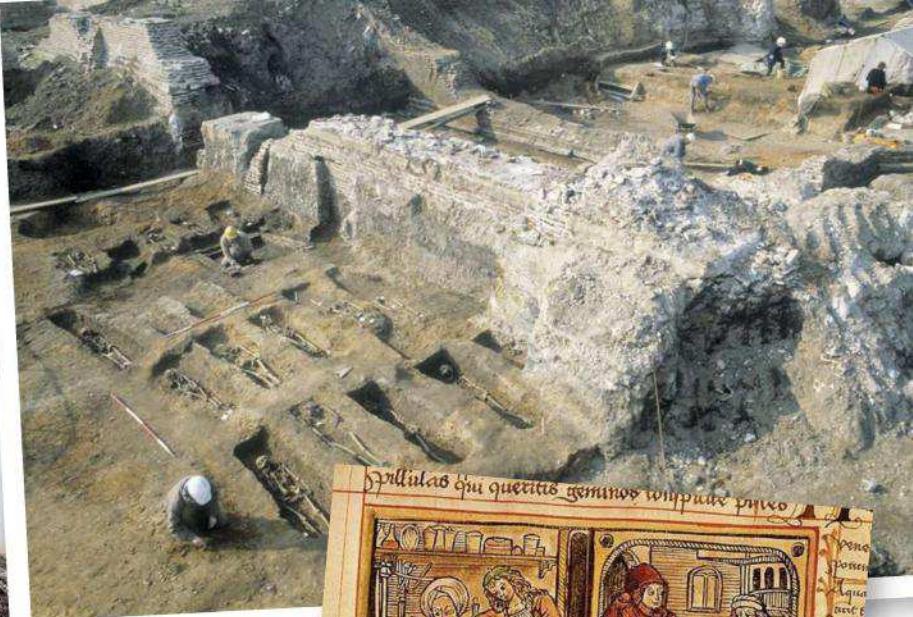
People would resort to desperate and futile preventative measures in the hope of protecting themselves. Believing the plague was borne by an ill wind, some would not leave their home unless they had in their hands a posy of flowers, a smelling apple or a pomander full of nice fragrances. Inside their houses, some burned wood such as juniper, ash or vine, while others sprinkled vinegar and rose water on the floors.

**"Men and women carried their own children to the church and threw them into a common pit"**

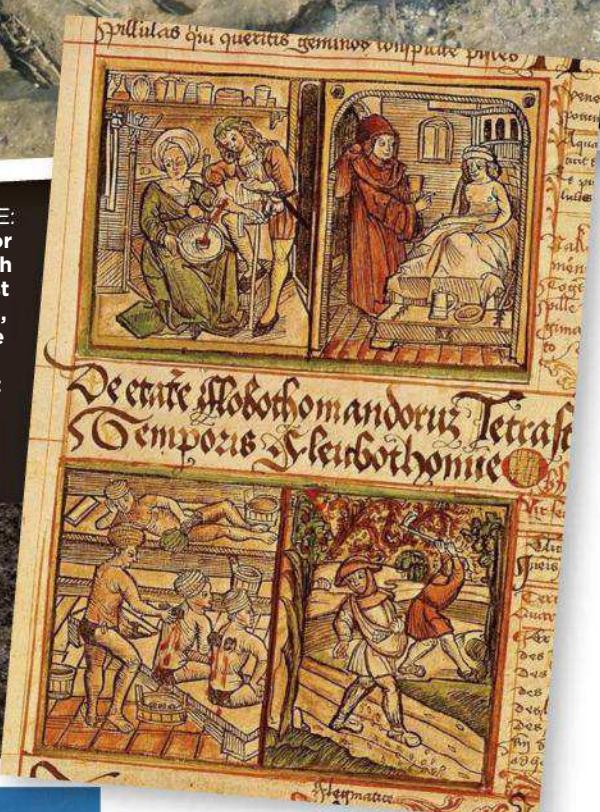
Hundreds of skeletons have been discovered while digging out a new rail station in London



**"The Black Death was an unholy trinity of diseases – a perfect storm of plagues"**



ABOVE:  
The cemetery for Black Death victims in East Smithfield, excavated in the 1980s  
RIGHT:  
A manuscript depicting blood-letting, a common 'cure' for the plague



## Plague hunting

How many died and how many survived are questions with no conclusive answers because few records remain. In England, there was no general census between the Domesday Book of 1086 and the poll tax returns of 1377. Historians diverge, therefore, on numbers, with estimates of England's pre-plague population ranging from 3.7 to 5 million, and the mortality rate varying from 23 per cent to a staggering 45 per cent. But the general consensus is that a plausible figure is one third of England's

4.2 million population died. What historians are agreed on is that the plague entered through Melcombe (below). Not only did a monk of Wiltshire, who survived, blame the Dorset port but so did *A Fourteenth-Century Chronicle from the Grey Friars at Lynn*. Describing the arrival of two vessels in June 1348, the chronicler wrote: "One of the sailors had brought with him from Gascony the seeds of the terrible pestilence and, through him, the men of that town of Melcombe were the first in England to be infected."

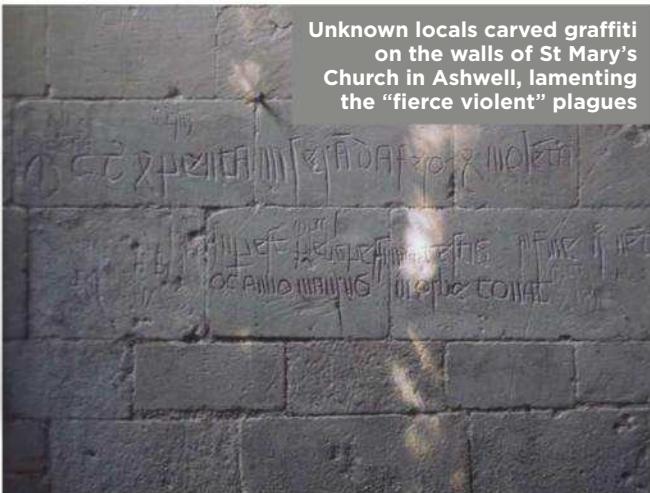


ALAMY XI, GETTY XS, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK X1

Exercise and amorous relations were considered a risk, given that one would breathe more air, so the pace of life slowed and people did their best not to perspire. As for diet, special recipes were devised for beating the plague: figs for breakfast, eggs dipped in vinegar, rhubarb and muskroot, meat that was roasted not boiled. The list went on. None of them worked.

In 1349, the noted Arab physician Ibn Khatimah published his seven tips for avoiding the pestilence. Included in the methods he advocated was sleeping in a room open to the north wind, as it was cooler and healthier than the humid southerly wind, and regular evacuation of the bowels.

For those who did wake up under the weather, or reached a hand with a gathering sense of dread under an armpit and felt a lump, there was – at least for those with the means – a proscribed course of treatment. First, the patient drank a sweet-tasting potion, "in particular a blend of apple-syrup, lemon, rose-water and peppermint". Then came the bleeding, which doctors



Unknown locals carved graffiti on the walls of St Mary's Church in Ashwell, lamenting the "fierce violent" plagues

believed would draw the plague from the body. The blood drained would be black and Ibn Khatimah recommended withdrawing no more than five pounds. He and many doctors cut open the boils and cauterised them with a variety of substances, including egg yolk.

## WRETCHED YEAR

What none of the physicians understood was why many people died without developing boils. The plague to them was the plague, and medical science was still centuries away from understanding that the Black Death was an unholy trinity of diseases: bubonic, pulmonary and septicaemic. In short, the Black Death was a perfect storm of plagues. The boils signified Bubonic plague; coughing blood was the calling card of pulmonary (also called pneumonic) plague – the most infectious as it was airborne – and septicaemic was often the quickest to kill, the victim dying before the boils had time to erupt.

For the 70,000 inhabitants of London, pulmonary plague arrived first, in the autumn of 1348, and it wasn't until the warmer weather of late spring that the bubonic strain started to strike. Wealth, status, age, sex – the disease made no distinction, carrying off the dirt poor and the filthy rich, cutting a swathe through the trade guilds and killing the Archbishop of Canterbury. Nobody knows for certain how many died in London. Somewhere between 25,000 and 40,000. The plague's peak was the summer of 1349 but Londoners were still dying the following year.

And then it vanished, and the city, like the country, like the continent, began the monumental task of rebuilding. The Black Death left an indelible mark, not just in the overflowing cemeteries and underpopulated villages, but in the minds of those who survived. As a parishioner carved into the wall of St Mary's Church in Ashwell, Hertfordshire, 1349 had been a "wretched, terrible, destructive year".

## GET HOOKED

### READ

*The Black Death* by Philip Ziegler (originally published 1969) is still regarded as one of the more fascinating overviews of how the plague spread from Asia to Europe.

*The Black Death: an Intimate History* by John Hatcher (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2008) uses scrupulously researched contemporary sources and educated speculation to recreate life in a Suffolk parish as they endure the pestilence.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
The last outbreak of bubonic plague in Britain was in Glasgow in 1900, when 16 people died.

# Great Plague of London

The plague returned intermittently to Britain several times after the Black Death, with particularly virulent attacks in 1563 and 1603, when nearly a quarter of London's population died in both instances. The plague influenced the works of William Shakespeare, with the reference in *King Lear* to: "A boil, plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle in my corrupted blood", one of several mentions of the plague in his plays.

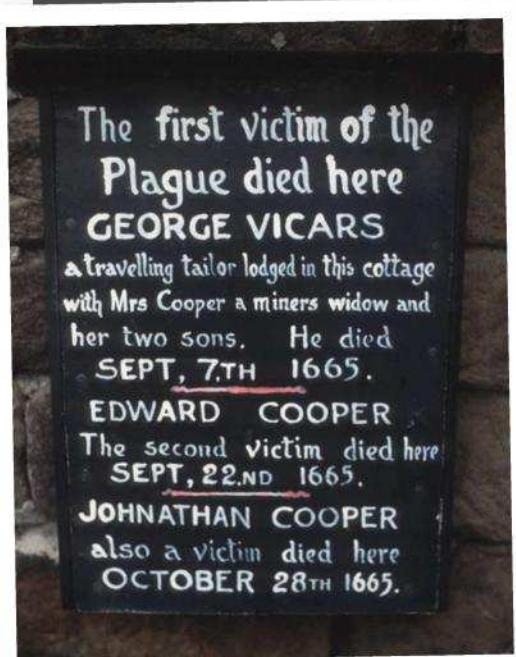
In 1665, nearly half a century after Shakespeare's death, Britain was visited once more by the plague with London at its epicentre. Unlike the Black Death of three centuries earlier, what became known as the Great Plague of London resonates far more because of the sophisticated first-hand accounts. Erudite men, notably the diarist Samuel Pepys, wrote vividly of the plague's

progress. On 7 June 1665, he wrote in his diary of seeing in Drury Lane, "two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and 'Lord have mercy upon us' writ there – which was a sad sight to me, being the first of that kind that to my remembrance I ever saw".

The words were a warning that the house was infected with the plague, the bubonic variety, spread by flea-carrying rats. On 31 July, Pepys wrote that the plague "grows mightily upon us" and at the end of August, he recorded: "Thus this month ends, with great sadness upon the public through the greatness [sic] of the plague, everywhere through the Kingdom almost. Every day sadder and sadder news of its increase."

Past experience of plagues, however, meant the disease didn't ravage Britain as a whole. Infected houses were quarantined and the rest of the country suspended trade with London. The measures worked and the plague, the last serious outbreak in Britain, was confined mainly to the capital.

Supposedly beginning with George Vicars (left), the Great Plague of 1665 killed 100,000 people in London





# The biggest, bloodiest battle ever fought on English soil?

The **Battle of Towton** was a brutal clash between the armies of Lancaster and York that saw thousands fight, and die, in howling winds and driving snow

**S**ome battles shocked even contemporaries by the intensity with which they were fought. Towton was such a battle. Regional hatreds and family vendettas ensured it was fought with a ferocity that, together with the large size of the armies involved, made it one of the bloodiest battles on English soil.

The Lancastrians must have felt confident of victory as they

bellowed insults at their Yorkist opponents on the bitterly cold Palm Sunday morning in 1461. They had already beaten their enemies at Wakefield and St Albans, occupied a strong position, had the advantage of numbers and, in their minds at least, were fighting for the rightful King of England.

Like many battles of the period the fighting began with an archery duel as Lancastrian longbowmen responded to a single volley of Yorkist arrows by

shooting thousands of their own arrows across the shallow valley that separated the two armies. But with a strong wind blowing bitter snow into their faces, the Lancastrians couldn't see that their arrows were falling harmlessly short. When the Lancastrians had used up all their arrows, the commander of the Yorkist vanguard, Lord Fauconberg, seized his opportunity. Tudor historian Edward Hall later commented: "The Lord Fauconberg marched

## KEY FACTS

- Date:** 29 March 1461
- Location:** North Yorkshire
- Terrain:** Open field
- Forces:** Lancastrians 25,000; Yorkists c20,000
- Duration:** c10 hours
- Outcome:** Decisive victory for Yorkists
- Casualties:** Unknown but extremely heavy

# Lancastrians were cut down as they struggled to cross the river, staining it red with blood



## WAR WOUNDS

Fragments of the very first **hand guns** and the first bullet ever to be recorded on a European battlefield have both been discovered at Towton. Excavations of a mass grave have revealed the **horrific injuries** caused by bladed and spiked weapons

## BRUTAL BLOWS

This skull, known as Towton 25, was one of many unearthed at the battle site. It has eight wounds, among them a huge horizontal gash to the back of the head and a crevice that runs from the left eye to the right jaw

forward with his archers, who not only shot their own whole sheaves [of arrows], but also gathered the arrows of their enemies, and let a great part of them fly against their own masters..."

With thousands of arrows now falling on their men and casualties mounting by the minute, the Lancastrian commanders had little option but to order an advance. The massed ranks of Lancastrians left their defensive position and headed off into the blizzard shouting "King Henry! King Henry!" The Yorkist line initially gave ground as the Lancastrians crashed into them but Edward IV's personal leadership proved crucial. Whereas Henry VI had been packed off to the safety of York, the tall figure of Edward could be seen fighting in the front line, encouraging his men.

The Yorkist line held and the battle developed into a long, vicious, hand-to-hand struggle with men laying about each other with swords, maces and polearms. Some accounts claim the battle lasted 10 hours, but this may have included earlier fighting at Ferrybridge. In any event, no one in armour could have fought for that long without a number of breaks.

The deadlock was finally broken when reinforcements turned the tide in the Yorkists' favour. Faced with these fresh troops the Lancastrian line slowly began to crumble. Many Lancastrians fought on, either because they were unaware of what was happening or because the crush meant they had nowhere to go, but the trickle of fugitives eventually became a flood and the Lancastrian line broke.

Edward had ordered his troops to take no prisoners and, pursued by Yorkist horsemen, many Lancastrians clambered down the steep slopes of the valley, only to be cut down as they struggled to cross the river, staining it red with blood. Others slipped in the water and were trampled underfoot. Contemporary claims that 28,000 men died that day are almost certainly an exaggeration, but Towton was highly unusual in terms of the intensity of the fighting and the number of casualties suffered. ◎



### BATTLE SCARS

Tudor historian Edward Hall estimated that the combined strength of the two armies was 100,000. This would have been about 15 per cent of England's adult male population, but is almost certainly an exaggeration

21

The area in square miles that bodies from the fighting were reported to have been found in

**THE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL**  
Soldiers struggle in the waters of Cock Beck at the Battle of Towton

## THE BUILD-UP TO THE BATTLE

The Battle of Towton was the bloody culmination of a series of military engagements in the early part of the Wars of the Roses...

In July 1460, Richard of York captured King Henry VI at the Battle of Northampton and claimed the throne of England. Most nobles balked at the idea of setting aside an anointed monarch, so a compromise was reached which saw Henry remain as king, with Richard as his heir.

However, Henry's wife, Margaret of Anjou, refused to countenance the disinheritance of her own son and raised a northern army to fight for the Lancastrian cause. In December 1460, Richard of York was defeated and killed at Wakefield leaving

his teenage son Edward as leader of the Yorkist faction.

Having stuck the severed heads of York and his son, the Earl of Rutland, on Micklegate Bar in the city of York, Margaret's forces headed to London where they defeated a Yorkist army at St Albans and recaptured Henry. But the capital refused to open its gates to what it saw as a horde of savage northerners. The Lancastrians fell back north, pursued by Edward, who had been declared King Edward IV by his supporters.

By 27 March, the Yorkists had reached Pontefract. Their next

objective was York but the next day they were delayed by a Lancastrian force at Ferrybridge.

The Lancastrian group was eventually outflanked but their dogged resistance gave the main Lancastrian army time to occupy a strong position on a plateau near Towton with their left flank protected by marshland and their right by the steep slopes of the Cock Valley.

On 29 March, the two armies prepared to do battle. The Lancastrians had perhaps 25,000 men; the Yorkists somewhat fewer although part of their army had not yet arrived on the battlefield.

# THE MAIN PLAYERS

## WARS OF THE ROSES

The Wars of the Roses were fought between supporters of the houses of Lancaster and York, two rival branches of the royal family. The wars were initially caused by the inadequacies of the Lancastrian Henry VI as a ruler and the ambitions of Richard of York, who demanded the leading role in government and then the throne itself.

The situation was frequently exacerbated

by bitter family rivalries among the wider nobility. Eventually, Henry Tudor, a Lancastrian claimant, defeated the Yorkist King Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 and united the two houses by marrying Edward IV's eldest daughter, Elizabeth.



### FIRST TUDORS

The marriage of Elizabeth of York and Henry VII in 1486 united the houses of York and Lancaster and began the Tudor dynasty

## THE FIGHTERS

Kings, nobles and commoners from all over England fought at the Battle of Towton, a bloody clash between the north and the south

Nobles and knights with retinues of well-trained and well-equipped men-at-arms formed the backbone of both armies at Towton. Both sides bolstered their forces through local levies, notably through Commissions of Array, an ancient way of compelling communities to provide able-bodied men for military service in times of national emergency. The men who fought were drawn from all across the country. Many Lancastrian soldiers came from the north of England, while the Yorkists drew the bulk of their forces from the Midlands, the South East and East Anglia. Indeed, some contemporary chroniclers described the battle not as Lancastrians against Yorkists, but as northerners against southerners.



### THE YORKISTS

#### Edward IV

King of England



The eldest son of Richard of York, 18-year-old Edward was an imposing figure, an inspiring leader and an able soldier.

#### Richard Neville

Earl of Warwick



The most powerful noble in the kingdom and a key Yorkist supporter. Known as 'the Kingmaker' for his role in helping Edward IV to the throne, Warwick later turned against him and was killed at the Battle of Barnet in 1471.

#### William Neville

Lord Fauconberg

A veteran of the Hundred Years War. Lord Fauconberg was an elderly man in 1461 but still a wily soldier. He commanded the Yorkist vanguard at Towton. Died in 1463.

### THE LANCASTRIANS

#### Henry VI

King of England



The last Lancastrian ruler of England was put to death in 1471 while a prisoner in the Tower of London.

#### Henry Beaufort

3rd Duke of Somerset

Battlefield commander at Towton. His father was killed by the Yorkists at St Albans in 1455. Somerset survived the battle but was executed in 1464.

#### Henry Percy

3rd Earl of Northumberland

A powerful northern magnate and a bitter enemy of the Nevilles. He was killed at Towton.

## WEAPONRY AND ARMOUR:

Most soldiers brought their own weapons with them on campaign, although archers were issued with supplies of arrows. Hand-to-hand weapons ranged from polearms to swords and axes.

Full plate armour was expensive and only the wealthy could afford it. Others had to equip themselves with whatever they could lay their hands on – perhaps just a helmet and a padded jack.



### LONGBOW

Normally made of yew with a hemp bowstring. A devastating weapon against poorly-armoured troops. A skilled bowmen could shoot at least 10 arrows a minute with a maximum range of c275 metres



### BUCKLER AND SWORD

A small shield measuring 15-45cm in diameter that was gripped in the fist. Used to deflect an opponent's weapon and protect the sword hand

### BILL

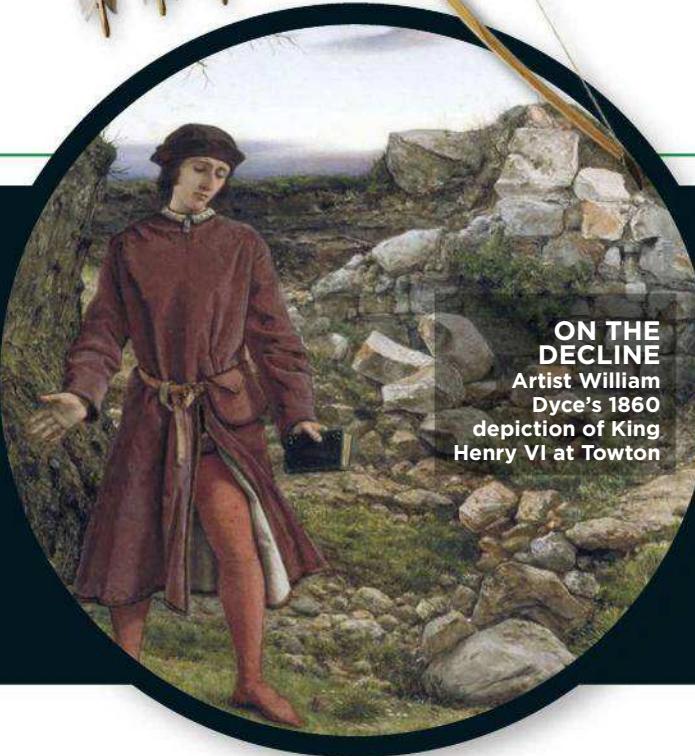
A cheap but handy infantry weapon. Mounted on a pole it consisted of a curved cutting blade fitted with spikes and could be used to stab and slice at flesh or tear or hammer at armour

### BOLLOCK DAGGER

Took its name from the unusual shape of its handguard. A close-quarter weapon that could be thrust into the eye slit of a helmet or gaps in armour, or used to finish off a wounded enemy

### SUIT OF ARMOUR

Surprisingly easy to move about in but stiflingly hot to wear. A well-made suit of good quality steel could keep out an arrow, even at close range



**ON THE DECLINE**  
Artist William Dyce's 1860 depiction of King Henry VI at Towton

## SHAKESPEARE AND TOWTON

The battle is a key episode in Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 3*. Some of the action is seen through the eyes of the weak and unwarlike Henry VI who watches events unfold while sitting on a molehill.

Shakespeare uses the scene to show the evils of civil war as a father discovers he has killed his son and a son his father. The war's vicious cycle of reprisal and revenge is illustrated through Lord Clifford, whose Lancastrian

father was one of those killed by the Yorkists at St Albans: Shakespeare has him take revenge by killing the Duke of York and his young son at Wakefield. York's son, the future Richard III, tries to kill Clifford at Towton, but Clifford dies before Richard can find him.

Shakespeare gives Richard a prominent part in the action but it should be noted that in 1461 he was actually only eight years old!

# THE FIELD OF BATTLE

How the fateful day unfolded

## 1 ARCHERY DUEL

Helped by the wind, Lord Fauconberg's Yorkist archers win their duel against their Lancastrian opponents. They pour thousands of arrows into the massed ranks of Lancastrians, forcing them to abandon their strong position and move forward to attack.

## 2 LANCASTRIANS ATTACK

Goaded by the Yorkist arrows, the Lancastrians advance. The Yorkists move forward to meet them. Weight of numbers gives the Lancastrians an advantage and the Yorkists are pushed back. However their lines hold, just, and the battle develops into a long drawn-out slogging match.

## SAXTON

## 3 YORKIST REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE

The arrival of the Duke of Norfolk's contingent tips the balance in favour of the Yorkists. The Lancastrian line slowly crumbles and then breaks.

## Dinting Dale

Lord Clifford ambushed and killed here after his delaying action at Ferrybridge

## References

- Lancastrian advance
- Lancastrian retreat
- Yorkist advance
- Yorkist reinforcements

## 4 LANCASTRIAN ROUT

The fleeing Lancastrians are ruthlessly pursued by the victorious Yorkists, some of whom are now mounted. Many Lancastrians are cut down in the open fields. Others drown in the waters of the Cock Beck, which are said to have run red with blood.

Cock Beck

Bloody Meadow

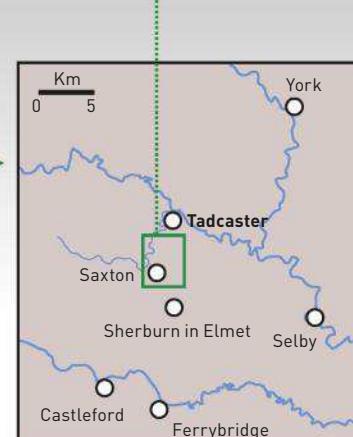
B1217

Cock Beck

To Tadcaster

TOWTON

Wind and snow direction



# WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

The Battle of Towton was a major turning point in the Wars of the Roses

Towton was a disaster for the Lancastrians: thousands of their soldiers were killed. Their commander, the Duke of Somerset, managed to escape, as did Henry VI, but five leading Lancastrian nobles were killed, including Northumberland and Clifford.

The Earl of Devon was captured and later beheaded in York. Dozens of Lancastrian knights had also fallen or been executed and Edward wasted no time in replacing the severed heads of his dead father and brother on York's Micklegate

Bar with those of some of his enemies.

The battle had been a personal triumph for Edward. It had confirmed his kingship and although some Lancastrians fought on in the north east for three years, their cause had been fatally weakened. Their last army was destroyed at Hexham in 1464. Henry VI was captured in the following year and was tucked away in the Tower of London.

The Earl of Warwick later rebelled against Edward IV when the King favoured the

family of his new wife, Elizabeth Woodville, and tried to reduce Warwick's influence on political affairs. Warwick briefly restored Henry VI to the throne but was killed by Edward at the Battle of Barnet in April 1471.

In May 1471, Edward IV once again defeated the Lancastrians, this time at Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire where Henry VI's son-and-heir, another Edward, was killed. Henry himself was then quietly put to death and Edward IV reigned unchallenged until his death in 1483.

## GET HOOKED

### VISIT THE BATTLEFIELD

Towton is an evocative and largely unchanged battlefield with good footpath access, a well-marked trail and some excellent information boards. The Towton Battlefield Society offers regular talks and guided walks, and organises a major commemorative event every Palm Sunday. [www.towton.org.uk](http://www.towton.org.uk)



ILLUSTRATION: JEAN-MICHEL GIRARD/WWW.THEARTAGENCY.CO.UK

**Monster or martyr?**  
Was Richard III  
really as mean as  
Shakespeare  
makes out?



HERO OR VILLAIN?

# RICHARD III

Explore the extraordinary life and changing  
reputation of England's most controversial king



A re-enactment of the Battle of Bosworth, at which Henry Tudor's forces slay King Richard

**L**arge crowds lined the streets as the coffin containing the remains of Richard III was taken to Leicester Cathedral for reinterment on 26 March 2015. The Archbishop of Canterbury led the service, members of the royal family were present, the Queen herself wrote a message for the order of service, while the Leicester authorities made it clear that Richard was being buried not just with dignity but with honour. For many of those present, Richard was a much-maligned king who was finally getting the respect he deserved. But not everyone saw it that way. Writing in *The Guardian*, Polly Toynbee bemoaned the fact that Britain "mourned a monster" simply because he had been king. Even today, this controversial monarch continues to divide opinions.

Born in 1452 at Fotheringhay, Northamptonshire, Richard was the fourth son of Cecily Neville and Richard of York, whose conflict with the Lancastrian Henry VI was a major cause of the Wars of the Roses. In 1460, Richard's father was killed at the Battle of Wakefield but in 1461, his eldest brother, Edward, defeated

## "Unlike his sibling, Richard appears the very model of a loyal younger brother"

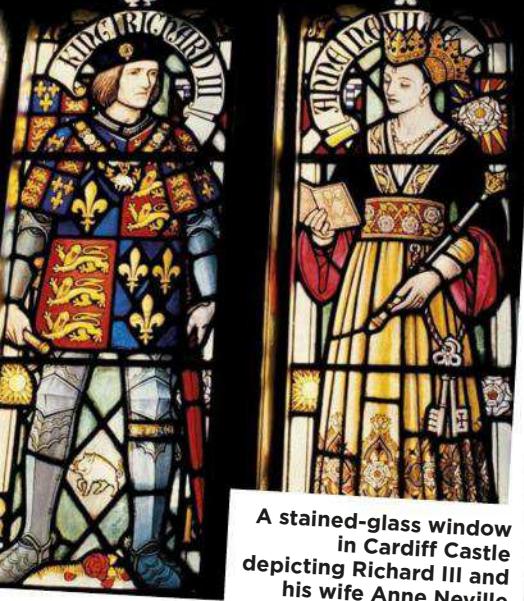
the Lancastrians at Towton, became Edward IV and appointed Richard Duke of Gloucester. Unlike his unreliable sibling, George, Duke of Clarence, whose machinations would see him executed in 1478, Richard appears the very model of a loyal younger brother. Living up to his motto of 'Loyauté me Lie' (Loyalty Binds Me), he joined Edward in exile after Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick had restored Henry VI to the throne in 1470. The following year, they returned

**Anthony Woodville (kneeling) was a loyal supporter of Edward IV (seated), and was executed in 1483 almost certainly on Richard's orders**

to England and Richard contributed to the Yorkist victories at Barnet (where Warwick was killed) and Tewkesbury where he led Edward's vanguard.

Richard was well rewarded. He was given control of lands confiscated from the Nevilles and his marriage to Warwick's daughter, Anne, gained him more territory in the north of England, which became his power base. As Edward's lieutenant in the north, he seems to have been an able administrator and the chronicler John Rous described him as a "good lord" who punished "oppressors of the commons".





A stained-glass window in Cardiff Castle depicting Richard III and his wife Anne Neville

Richard's importance was national as well as regional; in 1471, he was appointed both constable and admiral of England and in 1482, he commanded the invasion of Scotland that led to the capture of Berwick. Yet his position was not as secure as it might appear. The lucrative offices he held were dependant on the will of the monarch, while the act of parliament which gave him those Neville lands that had formerly belonged to Warwick's brother, Montagu, added to his insecurity. It stipulated that Richard and his heirs could only hold them while Montagu's son George Neville or any heirs he had were alive. If that family line died out, the lands would revert after Richard's death to another branch of the Neville family.

### TAKING THE PRINCES

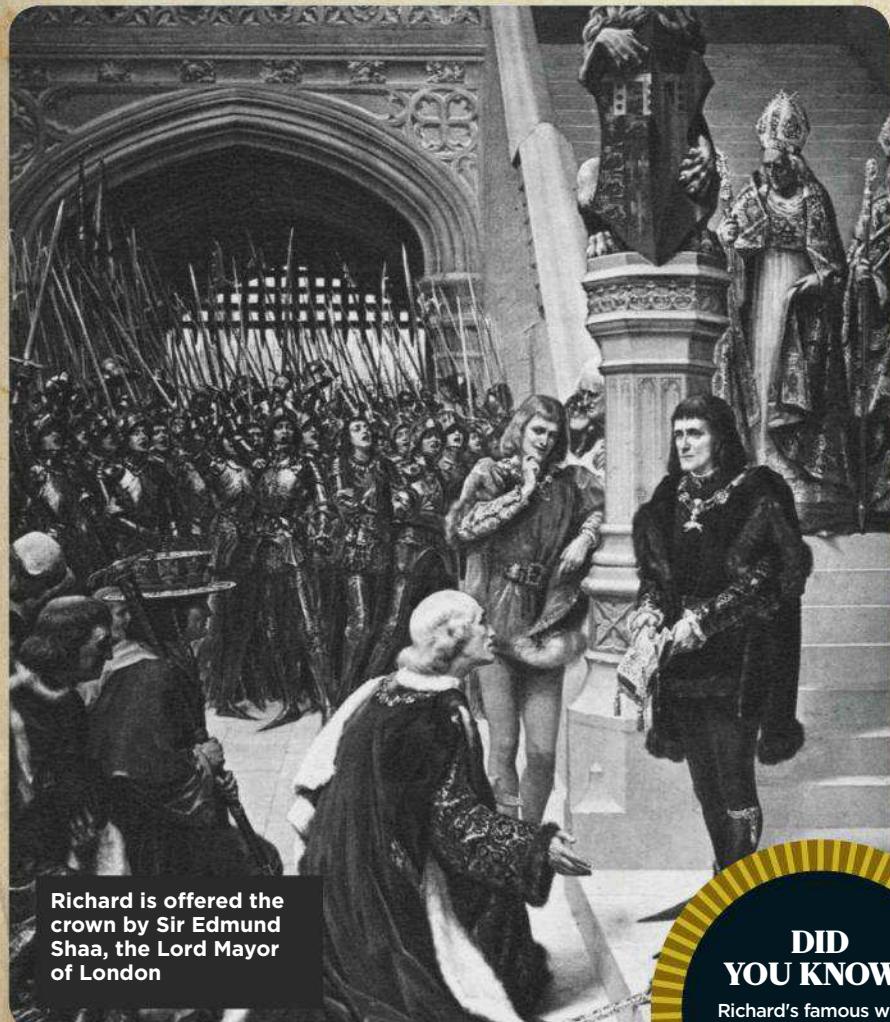
Even so, had it not been for his brother Edward's early death in April 1483, Richard might well have lived out his days as a successful regional magnate, and instead of the innumerable books we now have about him, we'd probably have to content ourselves with the odd biography and a few PhD theses. But the King's death changed everything.

Edward had named Richard as protector of his son and successor, the 12-year-old Edward V, but the problem was that the boy was at Ludlow in the care of his mother's family, the Woodvilles, and Richard, like many in the kingdom, didn't trust them. To secure his own position, Richard had to act quickly. As Edward travelled to London escorted by his uncle Anthony Woodville and his half-brother Richard Grey, Richard intercepted them at Stony Stratford. Claiming there was a plot against him, he arrested Woodville, Grey and a third knight, Thomas Vaughan, and took control of the young king.

After sending his prisoners to his castle at Pontefract, Richard escorted

# DID RICHARD USURP THE THRONE?

It rather depends on how you define 'usurp'. One dictionary describes it as "to seize power by force or without legal authority", so it has been argued that because Richard was actually offered the crown in 1483, there was no usurpation. However, the Oxford English Dictionary generally defines usurpation as the wrongful or unjust appropriation of power. Clearly, something can be carried out without force and/or have legal backing yet still be unjust, so those who consider that Richard acted wrongfully or unjustly in supplanting his young nephew can also argue that he did indeed usurp the throne.



Richard is offered the crown by Sir Edmund Shaa, the Lord Mayor of London

### DID YOU KNOW?

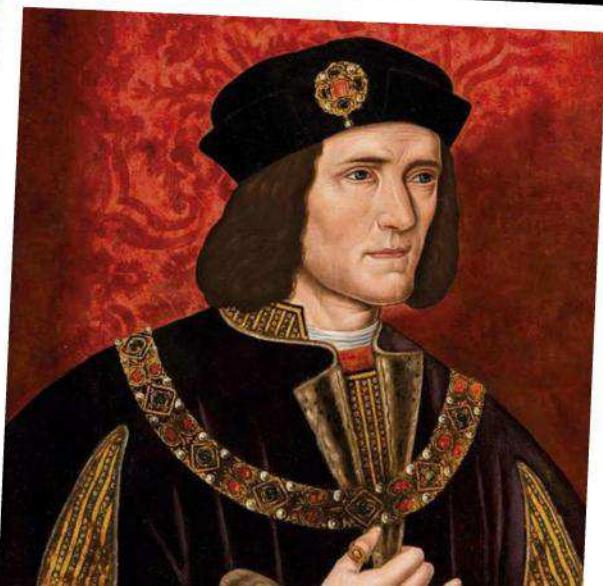
Richard's famous white boar badge was formerly the badge of the Lancastrian Earl of Devon

# DID HE HAVE A HUNCHBACK?

Strictly speaking, no. At the time, a deformed body was linked with an evil mind, and this led many to argue that the portrayal of Richard as a hunchback was pure invention – part of the campaign by Tudor writers to blacken his name. So, the revelation that the skeleton uncovered in the Leicester car park had a seriously deformed spine caused quite a sensation. Although this was a scoliosis (sideways curvature of the spine) rather than a kyphosis (a true hunched back) and it's been proved that it wouldn't have prevented him from charging into battle, it's thought that one of Richard's shoulders would have been noticeably higher than the other.

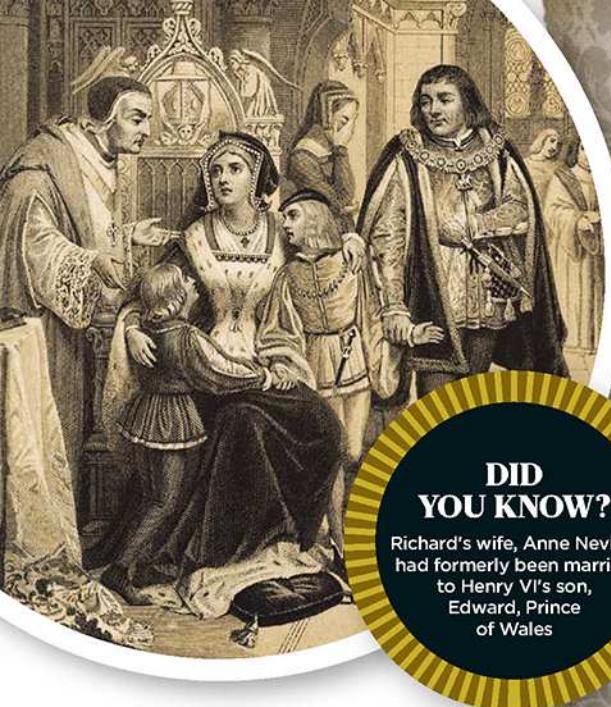


RIGHT: A 16th-century portrait of Richard. One shoulder has been overpainted to make it appear higher than the other. ABOVE: Benedict Cumberbatch portrayed Richard in *The Hollow Crown*



The discovery of Richard's skeleton proved that he did suffer from a curvature of the spine

# The Houses of Lancaster and York



## DID YOU KNOW?

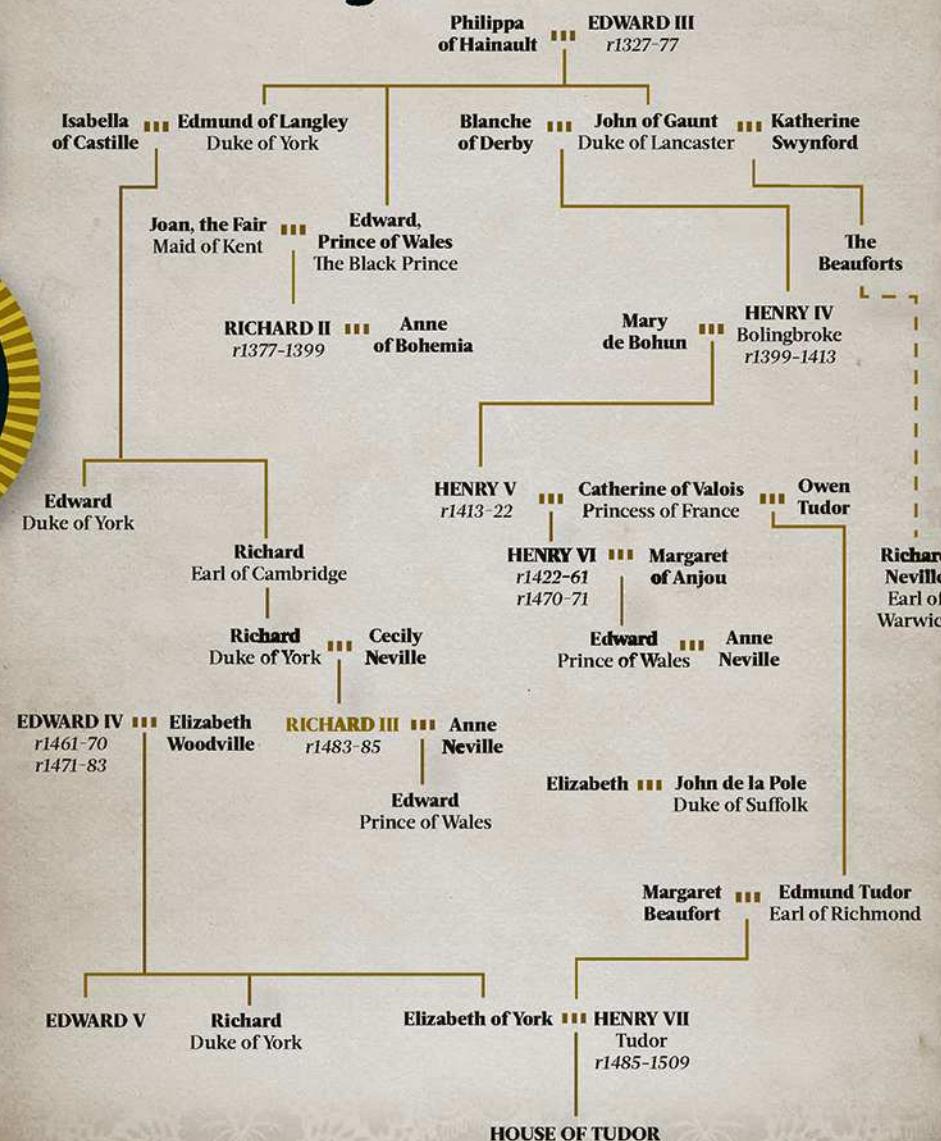
Richard's wife, Anne Neville, had formerly been married to Henry VI's son, Edward, Prince of Wales

A Victorian print fictitiously showing an 'evil' Richard taking his two nephews from their mother

Edward to the capital and lodged him in the Tower of London, to be joined later by his brother. There was nothing sinister in this – the Tower had yet to acquire its gruesome reputation, and it was traditionally used by English monarchs prior to their coronations. The Woodvilles had never been popular, and Richard's actions seem to have been met with approval by other members of the late king's household, notably the Duke of Buckingham, who'd helped him at Stony Stratford, and Edward IV's old friend William Hastings. Despite the claims of later Tudor writers, there's no evidence that Richard's actions up to this point were part of a plot to seize the throne, and the preparations for Edward's coronation went ahead as normal. But that would soon change.

## A KING IS CROWNED

During a Council meeting in the Tower of London on Friday 13 June, Richard suddenly announced that there was another conspiracy against him, arrested three councillors and, with no regard whatsoever for due process of law, had Hastings summarily executed. It was nothing less than murder, and even the most devoted supporters of Richard struggled to justify it. Why did Richard have Hastings killed? Some claim that Richard had discovered that Hastings was plotting with the Woodvilles against him, but Hastings had a long-standing dislike of the Woodvilles and had supported Richard's move against them in April. It's more likely that Richard had now decided to seize the throne, but because Hastings was fiercely loyal to young Edward, he had to be disposed of first.



Why did Richard decide to make himself king? The official reason was publicised by Dr Ralph Shaa in a sermon preached at St Paul's Cross on 22 June. Because Edward IV had been precontracted to another woman (later

identified as Eleanor Butler) before he married Elizabeth, the Woodville marriage wasn't valid and Edward V and his siblings were therefore illegitimate. Technically, the son of the late Duke of Clarence was next in line, but he was barred from the succession because his father had been attainted for treason. The next legitimate candidate was therefore Richard.

However, many believe that Richard had already made up his mind to take the throne, and the bastardisation of his nephews and nieces was simply a political manoeuvre to clear them out the way. Although ambition may have motivated Richard, he may simply have believed that the country needed an experienced adult as ruler. He may

**"It was nothing less than murder, and even the most devoted struggle to justify it"**

## "It's clear that Richard was no more tyrannical than other monarchs of his time"

had been shocked by what they saw as Richard's usurpation, and it's unlikely that they would have fought for Tudor had they believed that Edward V or his brother were still alive. Their support for Tudor tells us something else. The fact that they were prepared to support a Lancastrian exile with a distant claim to the throne against the brother of Edward IV shows just how far the Yorkist cause had been split by Richard's actions. After suppressing the revolt, Richard tried to strengthen his hand by granting the land and offices forfeited by the largely southern rebels to a small group of his trusted servants, many of them from the north, but this merely added to his unpopularity. Richard had opposed the Woodville clique, but now he was ruling through a clique of his own.

Although on a personal level little went right for Richard – his only legitimate son died in 1484 and his wife in March 1485 – there were at least signs of the good government that had

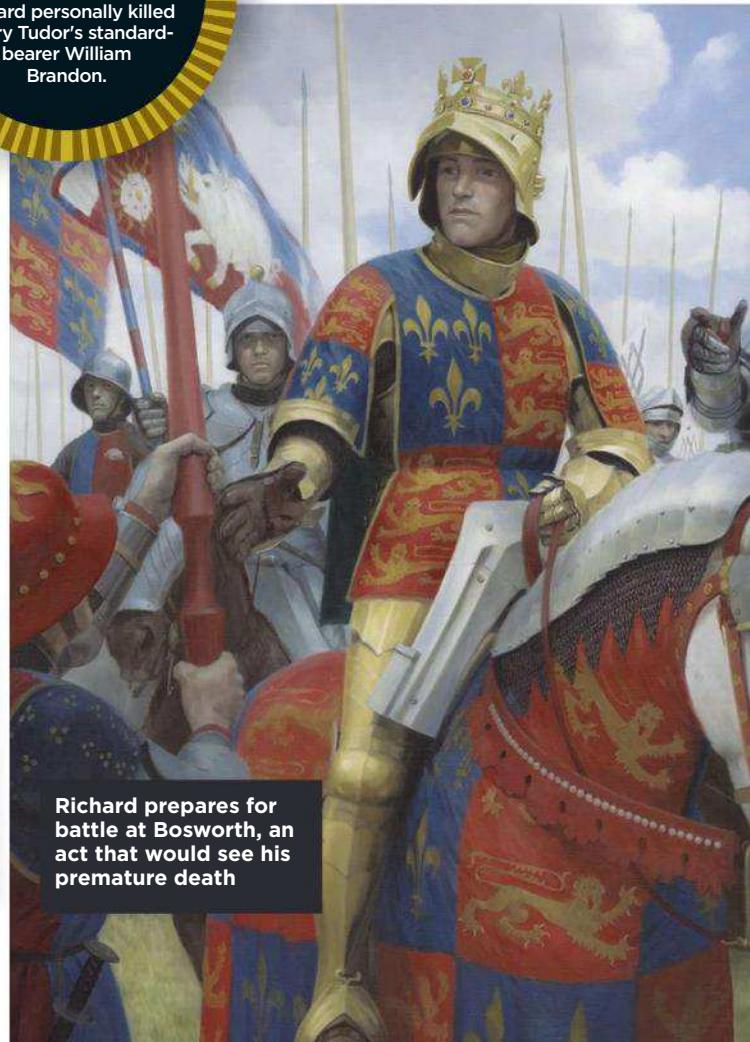
### DID YOU KNOW?

At the Battle of Bosworth Richard personally killed Henry Tudor's standard-bearer William Brandon.

characterised his time in the north. His only parliament sat early in 1484, and the statutes it passed included reforms to aspects of the legal system, laws to protect English merchants against unfair foreign competition, the outlawing of benevolences (royal financial demands without parliamentary approval) and the establishment of the College of Arms. Despite the efforts of later Tudor writers to portray him otherwise, it's clear that Richard was no more tyrannical than other monarchs of his time – and considerably less so than the son of his successor. Indeed, Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England under King James I, described Richard as "a good lawmaker for the ease and solace of the common people".

### FALL FROM GLORY

On 7 August 1485, Henry Tudor landed at Milford Haven with a small army of French mercenaries, former Yorkists and diehard Lancastrians. Nineteen months earlier, he had strengthened his appeal to disaffected Yorkists by promising to marry Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth, were he to gain the throne. Richard was reportedly delighted by the news of the landing; victory over Tudor would not only rid him of a troublesome focus of opposition, it would also imply





Lady Margaret Beaufort was the mother of Henry VII and a key player in plots against Richard

divine approval of his own regime. On 22 August, Richard confronted him at Bosworth in Leicestershire. Richard had the larger army but a third force, under William and Thomas Stanley, two former stalwarts of Edward IV's regime, lurked in the wings. Richard had good reason to be wary of them – they had been his rivals for influence in the north and Thomas was married to Henry Tudor's mother Margaret Beaufort. Richard tried to secure their loyalty by holding Thomas's son hostage, but when they eventually joined the battle in support



# DID HE KILL THE PRINCES IN THE TOWER?

We simply don't know. Indeed, we can't even be sure that they were both actually murdered. All we know is that they were never seen again after Richard became king. The lack of concrete evidence about their fates has enabled people to suggest a number of potential murderers: Richard III, the Duke of Buckingham, Henry VII – even Margaret Beaufort. However, it was rumoured at the time that Richard had caused their deaths, and he certainly had both motive and opportunity. Rumours are, of course, just rumours, but it's significant that Richard failed to scotch them by displaying the living boys. Of course, none of this highly circumstantial evidence is conclusive, but if murder did take place, it's difficult not to see Richard as at least the prime suspect.



It is thought that Edward V and his younger brother Richard were murdered

# WHY WASN'T HE BURIED IN YORK?

Because, in keeping with normal practice, where remains found in archaeological digs are reburied in the nearest consecrated ground, the exhumation licence granted to the University of Leicester made provision for Richard's bones to be reinterred in Leicester Cathedral. This didn't stop people suggesting alternative sites: Westminster Abbey (where his wife is buried); Windsor (his brother); Fotheringhay (his father) – and York Minster. Supporters of York pointed out Richard's close links with the city, and tried to argue, not totally convincingly, that his endowment of a large chantry in York was evidence that he wished to be buried there. In May 2014, the High Court threw out a call for wider consultation over the reburial by the pro-York 'Plantagenet Alliance', and Leicester got the green light.

## DID YOU KNOW?

At the time of Richard's death, negotiations were taking place for him to marry the sister of John II of Portugal, who was descended from the House of Lancaster.

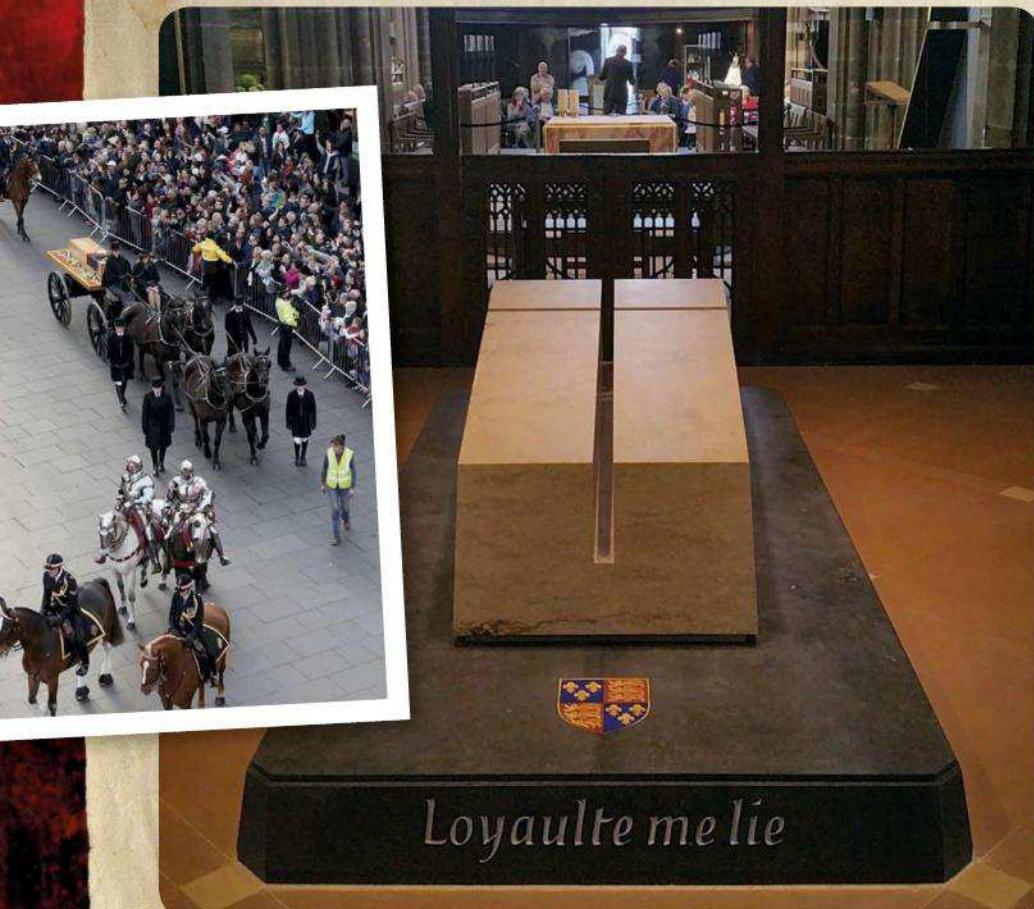
Laurence Olivier plays Shakespeare's Richard III at the New Theatre, London, 1944

of Henry, it proved decisive. Spurning flight, Richard led a mounted charge in a desperate bid to kill Henry Tudor. It came within a whisker of success, but Richard found himself unhorsed and, as Polydore Vergil later put it, he was cut down "fighting manfully in the thickest press of his enemies". Not even the most virulent of his Tudor critics ever accused Richard of cowardice.

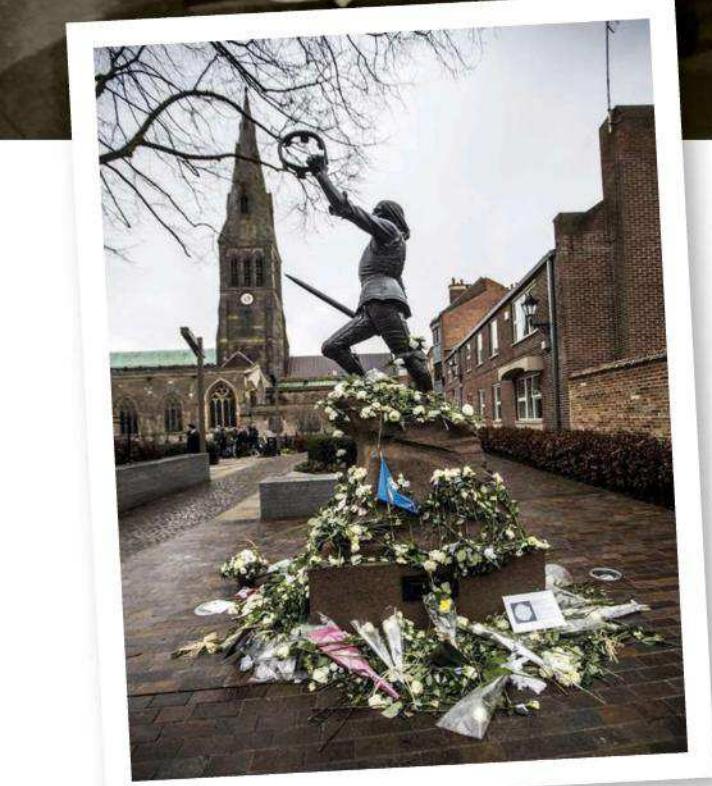
## CREATING A VILLAIN

The century after Bosworth would see a succession of accounts, all portraying Richard in a highly unfavourable light. Rous, who had earlier praised Richard, now described him as a monstrous tyrant, born with teeth and hair after being in his mother's womb for two years. Polydore Vergil, an Italian commissioned by Henry VII to write a history of England, claimed Richard planned to seize the throne as soon as his brother died. Thomas More accused Richard of a succession of murders, including Henry VI and of course the Princes in the Tower, and describes him as "ill featured of limbs, crook backed..." Later Tudor writers like Hall and Hollinshed told similar stories.

Inevitably, this 'Tudor' version of events would be challenged, notably by George Buck in 1619, Horace Walpole in 1768 and Clements Markham in 1906. Nineteen twenty-four saw the foundation of the Fellowship of the White Boar, the forerunner of the Richard III Society that has done so much to foster interest in the period, and which spearheaded the campaign to rediscover Richard's remains. In 1951,



ABOVE: Richard III now lies in a tomb in Leicester Cathedral  
INSET: Thousands lined the streets to watch the King's funeral procession



**White roses, the symbol of the House of York, adorn a statue of Richard outside Leicester Cathedral**

those who harboured doubts about Richard's involvement in the murder of the princes found unexpected support in the form of crime novelist Josephine Tey. In *The Daughter of Time*, Tey's fictional detective is recovering from a broken leg when he sees a portrait of Richard III. Convinced that his features are not those of a murderer, he examines the evidence and concludes that Richard's guilt was a fabrication of Tudor propaganda.

Recent decades have seen a decided switch in public attitudes to Richard. He's now seen by many not as a villain, but as a man largely innocent of the crimes he's been accused of and whose rule was cruelly cut short by betrayal on the battlefield. Others are more circumspect. Rejecting the 'Tudor myth'

## THE HUNCH THAT PAID OFF

### Uncovering Richard's remains

After his death at Bosworth, Richard III's body was buried in Greyfriars, a Franciscan friary in Leicester. Legend had it that when the friary was dissolved in 1538, Richard's remains were thrown in the river Soar, but many were unconvinced. In 2011, Philippa Langley of the Richard III Society approached Leicester University with funds towards an archaeological project to find Richard's remains, which she argued were probably still in the ground. Excavations began in August 2012 and, almost immediately, a skeleton was found in what would be identified as the choir of the friary church. Analysis suggested a man in his early 30s who'd suffered fatal battle-related injuries and, remarkably, had a curvature of the spine. Radiocarbon dating confirmed that the individual lived between 1450 and 1540. The signs suggested it was probably Richard; that probability became a certainty when DNA samples from two of the King's collateral descendants matched that of the skeleton.



**ABOVE: The human remains discovered in trench one were identified as those of Richard**  
**RIGHT: Archaeologists mark out areas to excavate in a Leicester car park**



of a calculating schemer who revels in evil, they nevertheless point out that while Richard may not necessarily have been a bad man, he was certainly a bad king whose actions ultimately led to the destruction not only of himself but also of the Yorkist dynasty.

Finally, of course, there's Shakespeare. Drawing on the writings of Hall and Holinshed, Shakespeare's play gives us a villainous hunchback who had plotted all along to seize the crown. (In doing so he may have been aiming a sly dig at Robert Cecil, Elizabeth's unpopular minister who did have a hunchback). He makes Richard responsible for just about every significant killing in the Wars of the Roses – from the Duke of Somerset at St Albans in 1455 (quite difficult as Richard was only two at the time) to the Princes in the Tower 30 years later.

Shakespeare's Richard is a monster, but there's no denying he's a memorable one. It's tempting to conclude that without the lasting interest caused by that grossly unfair portrayal, Richard's short and unsuccessful reign would be largely consigned to the footnotes of history, there would be no Richard III Society and this controversial king's body would still be resting under a Leicester car park. ☺

#### GET HOOKED

##### SOCIETY

For more information about Richard's life and times, news of events and details on how to join the society, check out the Richard III Society website at [www.richardiii.net](http://www.richardiii.net)

##### BOOK

*Richard III: A Ruler and his Reputation* (Bloomsbury 2015) takes a fresh look at Richard's life and how he has been portrayed.

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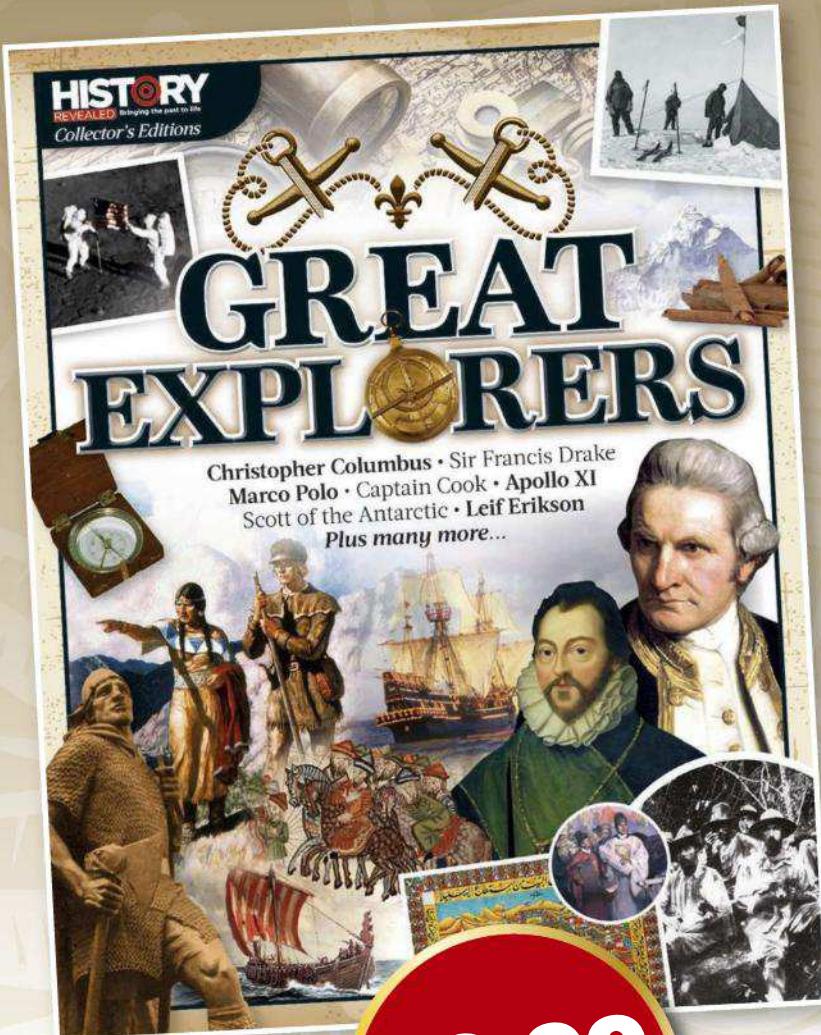
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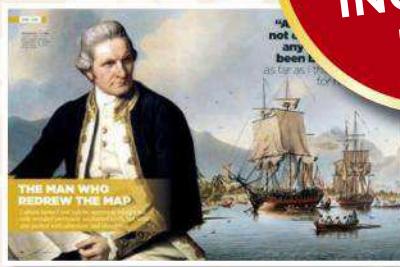
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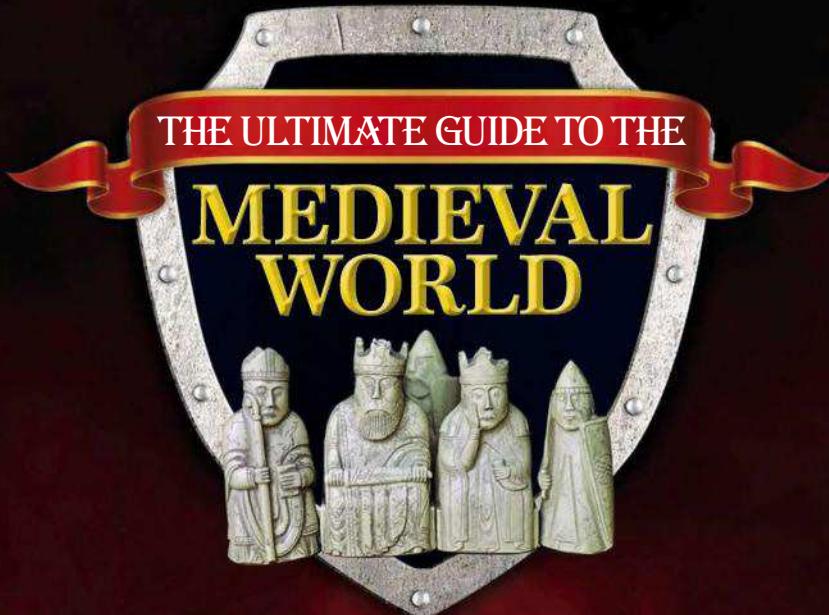
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